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{ WITH CHRISTMAS }  
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CHRISTMAS EVE: HANGING UP HOLLY AND MISTLETOE.—(DRAWN BY J. T. LUCAS.)



## TOPICS OF THE DAY.

THE philanthropic outcry on the subject of the Jamaica massacre (the massacre of the black men by the white, not of the white men by the black) has abated a little since the official announcement of the impending inquiry. Colonel Hobbs, who left Jamaica a hero and arrived in England to find that by a large portion of the public he was regarded as a villain, will return to the scene of his recent exploits; and, in time, perhaps unprejudiced people will be enabled to form a reasonable opinion as to what the nature of those exploits really was. It is very difficult to believe that Colonel Hobbs and the officers employed under him, rode about the island shooting the negroes down like game, or hanging them up for the mere fun of the thing; but, on the other hand, we have no evidence to show that the insurrection which Colonel Hobbs declares he suppressed had any substantial existence. The defenders of the course adopted by the local Government will, no doubt, argue that the insurrection was just beginning, and that it was only prevented from becoming very formidable by the energetic measures taken against it at the outset. According to the reports sent in by the officers, who seem to have been employed in scouring the country in search of a rebellion, there were no rebels to be found, or at least none with arms in their hands; and we shall be a little surprised if it should ever be proved on good testimony that the black population of the island, taken as a mass, had rendered themselves guilty of anything more serious than an intention to rebel. That some plot, more or less vague, had been formed is shown by the simultaneous movements which took place among the negroes on several estates as soon as the news was received of the Morant Bay affair. According to the extracts from various private letters which have found their way to the newspapers, the meditated attack of the blacks upon the white population was precipitated by the events at Morant Bay; but it certainly looks to us very much as though the onslaught made upon the negroes wherever the soldiers happened to pass had the character of reprisals, and was caused merely by a desire to avenge the death of the white men who at the very commencement of the disturbances were so foully murdered.

We fancy, too, that it will be quite impossible to acquit the Jamaica authorities of the charge of cruelty. Whatever exasperation may have been caused by the barbarous conduct of the negroes at Morant Bay, and by the belief—doubtless sincerely entertained—that they had planned a general massacre of the whites, nothing can excuse the conduct of the Provost-Marshal or those under whose orders he acted, if it be true that he hanged one man for making threatening grimaces while he was being flogged, and that others were flogged in order that they might have a "foretaste" of the severer punishment that awaited them, and which, it seems to have been feared, might have put an end to their existence, without causing them to suffer any very acute pain. If these despicable acts of cruelty cannot be disposed of as the invention of some infuriated penny-a-liner; if they were really perpetrated, then some one must be held responsible for them, and the guilty person or persons should be brought to justice without delay. Acts of savagery are sometimes committed in hot blood, in the field, which it is difficult to punish, and which, when great provocation has been received, may, to a certain extent, be excused. But in these cases preliminary flogging—that is to say, torture—seems to have been administered as part of a judicial sentence, while punishment by death was inflicted on the unfortunate man who "made faces," as though it were the natural legal consequence of his offence. We should not, however, be rash in forming a judgment on late events in Jamaica. We are still very much in the dark on the subject; and we all know that newspaper paragraphs and letters of subaltern officers in a time of excitement are not to be relied upon. Possibly the accounts as to shooting negroes may turn out to have no more truth in them than had many of the tales we were told about "potting the pandies" during the Indian mutiny.

"Was there or was there not an insurrection to suppress?" will, however, be the great question that the Commission of inquiry will have to determine. If there was so much as a prospect of 50,000 whites being assailed by 350,000 blacks, it was absolutely necessary for the Government to assume the offensive and to act with all possible vigour. If one man is—or has good reason for believing that he is—about to be set upon by seven, he does not wait for the seven men to surround him before entering into conflict with them. His only chance is to deal with them separately so as to prevent any combined action on their part; and to overcome at once, by a sharp, sudden attack, those who happen to be within his reach.

In Jamaica we have at least this consolation, that the insurrectionary feeling that prevails among the blacks can be dealt with locally. In Ireland, on the other hand, the disaffection that undoubtedly exists among a portion of the population is fed from America. There is nothing very alarming, or even very new, in the organisation of the Fenians in Ireland itself. In the annual register for 1798 an account is given of the organisation of the United Irishmen, on which that of the Fenians is evidently modelled. The United Irishmen were assembled in "meetings" and in "committees" of various kinds. No meeting consisted of more than twelve persons. Five of these meetings were represented by five members in a committee vested with the management of all their affairs. From each of those committees, which were styled baronial, a deputy attended in a super or committee that presided over all those of the barony or district. One or two deputies from each of those superior committees composed one for the whole county, and two or

three from every county committee composed a provincial one. The provincial committees chose in their turn five persons to superintend the whole business of the nation. They were elected by ballot, and only known to the secretaries of the provincial committees, who were originally the scrutineers. Thus, though their power was great, it was invisible; and they were obeyed without being seen or known.

But the United Irishmen formed a strong (and more or less united) party in Ireland, whereas the Fenians have neither the priests, nor the peasantry, nor the landed proprietors, nor the respectable shopkeepers on their side. But as long as Fenianism has its head-quarters in America, it will be difficult to extirpate it in Ireland; and we may be quite sure that the Fenian organisation in the United States will exist as long as the Irish residents there are idiotic enough to pay for its support. It appears that the Fenians have a regular "government" at New York, with the usual departments of war, treasury, home, and foreign affairs; and as in some cases the directors of these departments are not even Irishmen, but are mere American adventurers, it may fairly be supposed that in the Fenian, as in other governments, the various offices have salaries attached to them.

## CHRISTMAS EVE.

It has lately become the fashion amongst some young men and women to affect to despise Christmas, with all its social customs, its family reunions, its simple, old-fashioned observances—perhaps, even its loving associations. They are so smart in their half-fledged cynicism that they see nothing suggestive in the orthodox plum-pudding; they are so genteel that, like the fine ladies at Farmer Flamboyant's, they expend over a French novel sentiments of refinement which would be altogether shocked at Hunt the Slipper and Blindman's Buff; they regard the meeting of relations as "a bore," and a family dinner-party, which they do nothing to enliven, as "a horror." Christmas cheer is to them but a subject for a Christmas jeer, and this is exactly the sort of joke they would make about it, as they give that little impertinent, flippant, giggle which is their nearest approach to merriment. So to them there is no meaning in wassail, and even holly and mistletoe have lost all significance.

Well, Heaven help them to a better mind, and let us be thankful that their doctrines are not yet universally adopted. They are generally pretty well off, these young people, and have not learnt to look thankfully upon the dinners which they are condescending enough to consume. They eat their turkey under protest, impose conditions before they consent to take kindly to mince-pie, and generally behave as though they paid their victuals a flattering attention by condescending to devour the best part of what comes before them.

It is otherwise with hundreds and thousands of English men and women scattered all over the globe, and who have learnt to regard Christmas as a genial, kind, forgiving time, when old grudges should—ay, *must* be forgotten, old wounds healed, old enmities forgiven, old friendships refounded.

It is otherwise with hundreds of the poor who have to make a hard shift during eleven out of the twelve months in the year, but yet would feel their poverty hard to bear indeed if they could not make some humble festivity, and display some little blessed token of their one holiday at Christmas-tide.

The great occasion may be said to begin about a week before Christmas Day, in the stoning of the plums, the refurbishing of the house, the rubbing and brightening of chairs and tables, and the little nameless additions of a bit of ribbon to a cap border and a bow to a turned gown, which give an air of newness to scanty and well-worn attire.

Then what arrangements have to be made about the expected guests, and the latest moment at which dinner can possibly be kept back; how the doubts as to the resources of the household in the matter of plates and spoons are set at rest by the arrival of one of the party on Christmas Eve with a dozen of knives and forks and "all the silver," consisting of "six teas, a pair of gravies, and a pair of salts;" how the finances are considered with reference to the possibility of a pint of red and a pint of white wine, as well as the bottle of gin that came from the club with the goose, and the half pint of real French brandy, some of which will be devoted to the pudding.

All these doubts happily solved at last! The pudding ready mixed in the great red pan; the copper fire laid ready for lighting at five o'clock in the morning; the goose reposing in unconscious innocence with its gizzard tucked under its arm; the beef a "marbley" picture; the nuts, oranges, and apples arrayed with great effect on the sideboard, flanked by the two cut decanters polished to dazzling brightness, and containing the "red and white;" and half a dozen clean "parlour-pipes" stowed away with two ounces of the best bird's-eye in the cupboard next the fireplace. Then, and not till then, can the family give due attention to that last ceremony of Christmas-tide—the putting up of the holly.

What wonder that when engaged in this operation the housewife should sometimes give way to tears—that, in her own language, full of homely sentiment, she should feel "ready to have a good cry."

"Not because I'm unhappy, John dear," she takes care to tell her husband, as she leans for a moment on his shoulder to look at the effect of the last piece of laurel over the looking-glass; "not because I'm unhappy, but somehow I do feel like this now every Christmas time. It seems such a long time that we've been together; and there are the children, you know, John; and we've been very comfortable, haven't we? and then we can afford to have a nice Christmas dinner, can't we? and, oh, John dear, you're generally such a good, kind old man, and I don't know what we should do if we was ever to part!"

"Come, come," says John, sternly repressing a tear, and taking her rough and work-hardened but still small and comely hand in his, "this ain't the sort of thing, you know, old woman. You're a fine un for Christmas Eve, aint you, to go and talk about parting; we shan't part for a many years yet, please God. You're overdone, that's what you are, and want a little something to cheer you up. Now, then, for the bit of mistletoe."

It is unnecessary to say how that old, old ceremony of the mistletoe, performed by her husband and the father of her children, brings back upon her sometimes anxious heart such a full tide of recollections that for the moment she is a girl again, and her matronly face is suffused with a tender blush that lifts the shadows of the years away from it—lifts the shadows from her heart, too, so that she can think with sober joy of that meeting to-morrow typical of the future union of which the holy Christmas-tide gives yearly hope and promise.

MR. CLAY'S REFORM BILL.—Mr. James Clay, M.P., has intimated to Mr. Newton, the secretary of one of the Hull Reform Associations, his intention early in the ensuing Session to introduce a reform bill, framed in the spirit of the speech on this subject which he delivered just before the last election. Mr. Clay proposes an educational test for electors. He would have an examination, which, when passed, would entitle any man to a vote, and he would make the test so low that a working man of ordinary intelligence could obtain a vote by sacrificing his leisure hours for six months.

A NEGRO CONVENTION.—A convention of negroes was held at Charleston, South Carolina, on the 13th ult. The proceedings were conducted with great order and decorum. They adopted resolutions stating that they cherished no malice towards slaveholders, thanking the Abolitionists for their efforts in their behalf, and asserting that all men are equal, whatever their colour. They had appealed to the Legislature of South Carolina for justice, for the repeal of all laws debarring them from the rights of suffrage and from giving evidence or acting as jurymen in courts of law; and claimed to be represented in Congress.

## Foreign Intelligence.

## FRANCE.

The marriage of Princess Anna Murat with the Duke de Mouchy was celebrated at Paris on Monday. The religious part of the ceremony was performed in the chapel of the Palace of the Tuilleries, before the Emperor and Empress and a brilliant assemblage. The wedding breakfast was partaken of at the Tuilleries, the Emperor honouring the newly-married couple by himself proposing their health and happiness.

The speech of the new King of the Belgians has made a favourable impression in Paris. President Johnson's Message is not considered quite satisfactory at the Bourse—the opinion of the Government and the public is not known, as the press is totally silent about it.

## BELGIUM.

## FUNERAL OF THE LATE KING.

THE funeral obsequies of the late King of the Belgians, of whom we this week publish a Portrait, were celebrated on Saturday, and were most imposing. The façade of the palace was draped with black tapestry, studded with golden lions, and was illuminated by numerous funeral lamps. At 10.30 a.m. the Duke of Brabant entered the room where the body of the deceased King lay in state, having on his right the King of Portugal, and followed by the Count of Flanders and the Prince of Wales, the latter of whom wore the scarlet uniform of an English Field Marshal, the Crown Prince of Prussia and the Archduke Joseph of Austria, Prince Louis of Hesse, and Prince Arthur, who was dressed in the Highland costume. Other high personages followed, among whom were the Prince de Joinville, the Duke d'Aumale, and the Duke de Nemours. After the Royal Princes came the Envoys-Extraordinary from the different Courts of Europe, including Lord Sydney and General Grey. At eleven o'clock the funeral cortege started. The hearse, drawn by eight horses caparisoned in black, presented a very imposing appearance. Crowds, silent and collected, thronged the streets, windows, and the roofs of the houses. All the shops and offices in Brussels were closed.

The cortege arrived at Laeken at 2.30 p.m. The Duke of Brabant, with the King of Portugal on his right and the Prince of Wales and Prince Arthur on his left, took his place in the temporary church in front of the sarcophagus, followed by the other Princes and representatives of foreign Powers. The funeral service having been performed, the coffin was lowered into the family vault, and placed to the right of the Queen of the deceased Monarch.

## INAUGURATION OF LEOPOLD II.

King Leopold II. took the oath to the Constitution before both Houses of the Belgian Parliament on Sunday.

Upon leaving the palace at Laeken the Queen, in deep mourning, preceded the King in a carriage drawn by six horses. The King followed a few minutes afterwards. His Majesty received the congratulations of the Burgomaster of Laeken, and, after replying in gracious terms, mounted on horseback, accompanied by the Duke of Flanders and the Archduke Joseph of Austria. The King and Queen were received with enthusiastic cheers along the entire route, and arrived at the House of Parliament at mid-day, where a similar reception awaited them. The King wore the uniform of a Lieutenant-General of the Belgian Army and the Grand Cordon of the Order of Leopold. Bareheaded, and with outstretched hands, his Majesty pronounced the words of the Constitutional oath in a firm voice. The taking of the oath to the Constitution created great enthusiasm.

His Majesty then made a speech, in which he stated that Belgium, as well as himself, had lost a father. He was moved by the homage of the nation and the sympathy of foreign Sovereigns and Princes, and thanked them in his own name and in the name of his country. His Majesty continued:—

"I shall religiously follow the example and the precepts of my father, and shall never forget the duties imposed upon me by this precious inheritance. I will be a Belgian King from my heart and soul. I love those great institutions which guarantee order and liberty, and which are the most solid bases of the throne. My Constitutional position keeps me aloof from the conflict of opinions, leaving the country to decide between them. I desire to give those who devote themselves to the crowning of the national edifice the assurance of my co-operation. By activity and progress Belgium will retain the support of foreign Powers."

His Majesty repeated the words uttered by his late father upon ascending the throne—"My heart knows no other ambition than to see you happy," and concluded by imploring the Divine assistance and protection for himself and Belgium.

His Majesty's speech was received with great enthusiasm. The Queen then presented her son to the Chambers, and their Majesties took their departure amid shouts of "Vive le Roi! Vive la Reine! Vive le Comte de Hainault!"

The city was adorned with flags, the houses being hung with decorations. A general illumination took place in the evening.

## SPAIN.

The Queen of Spain made her entry into Madrid on Thursday afternoon week, and was received by the Duke of Tetuan. She was cheered, and perfect order prevailed.

## SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss want another revision of their Constitution. Large meetings have been held in the canton of Berne and in the Grisons, at which resolutions were passed in favour of calling together the Federal Assembly for the purpose of revising the Constitution.

## WALLACHIA.

Prince Couza has made a speech, it seems, in which he professed his readiness to abdicate if, by doing so, he would bring nearer the realisation of his country's hopes. The speech, we are told, excited great enthusiasm.

## THE UNITED STATES.

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

President Johnson, in his Message to Congress, which met on the 4th instant, brings forward an elaborate argument in favour of his reconstruction policy. He says:—

It is not too much to ask, on the one side, that the plan of restoration shall proceed in conformity with the willingness manifested to cast the disorders of the past into oblivion; and, on the other side, that the evidence of sincerity in the future maintenance of the Union shall be put beyond a doubt by the ratification of the Constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. This being adopted, it will remain for the States to resume their places in Congress, thereby completing the work of restoration. Treason has been committed, and persons charged with treason should have a fair trial before a civil tribunal, in order that the laws may be vindicated and truth established. Treason is a crime, and traitors should be punished, and crime made infamous; and it should be judicially settled that no State can secede.

Since the commencement of the year the navy has been reduced from 530 vessels, armed with 3000 guns, to 117 vessels, with 830 guns. It is proposed to reduce the army to a peace footing, comprehending 50,000 troops, so organised as to admit of being increased to 82,000 men if the circumstances of the country should require it. The war estimate has been reduced from \$16 millions to \$3 millions.

The President recommends the adoption of measures to reduce the currency, and that a policy be devised for the discharge of the national debt within thirty years. He says:—

The gradual reduction of the currency is the only measure that can save the business of the country from disastrous calamities, and this can be almost imperceptibly accomplished by gradually funding the currency.

In reference to the foreign relations of the Union, Mr. Johnson says it will be his constant aim to promote peace and amity with foreign nations, and he believed them to be actuated by the same disposition.

The accordance of belligerent rights to the insurgents was unprecedented, and had not been justified by the issue. There was a marked difference in the system of neutrality pursued by foreign Powers. England in a great measure furnished the war material to the insurgents. British ships manned by British subjects, and prepared for receiving armaments, had left British ports to prey on American commerce, under shelter of insurgent commissions. The ships afterwards entered British ports to refit; this increased the devastation of the rebellious States by prolonging the contest, and it drove American commerce from the sea, and trans-



ferred it to that Power which had created the necessity of such a chance. A sincere desire for peace has induced him (President Johnson) to approve a proposal to submit the questions thus arising between the two countries to arbitration. These questions are so momentous that they must have commanded the attention of the great Powers, and are so interwoven with the peace and interest of every one of them as to have ensured an important decision. England declined arbitration, and prodded a commission to settle mutual claims, excluding therefrom the depredations of the Confederate cruisers. The proposition, in that very unsatisfactory state, had been declined. The United States does not present the subject as an impeachment of good faith on the part of a Power professing the most friendly dispositions, but as involving questions of public law, of which the settlement is essential to the peace of nations. Though pecuniary reparation would have followed on the decision against England, such compensation was not the primary object of the United States. It was in the interests of peace and justice to establish important principles of international law. The British Minister (said Mr. Johnson) rests his justification on the ground that the municipal law of a nation and the domestic interpretation thereof are measures of its duty as a neutral. That justification cannot be sustained before the tribunal of nations. At the same time, I do not advise any present attempt at redress by legislation. The future friendship of the two countries must rest on the basis of mutual justice. The United States Government maintained their traditional policy, leaving European nations to choose their dynasties from their own systems of Government. This consistent moderation may justify a demand for a corresponding moderation. The United States would regard it as a great calamity to themselves, to the cause of good government, and to the peace of the world, should any European Power challenge the American people, as it were, to defend Republicanism against foreign interference. The United States cannot force, and are unwilling to consider, what opportunities might present themselves, or what combinations might offer to protect them against designs inimical to their form of government. They desire to act in future as they have acted heretofore, and they will never be driven from that course but by foreign aggression, and they rely on the justice and wisdom of foreign Powers to respect the system of non-interference. The correspondence with France in reference to questions which have become subjects of discussion will, at the proper time, be laid before the House.

## CONGRESS.

In the Senate Mr. Sumner introduced a new test oath for the inhabitants of the rebellious States, and a bill to enforce the Constitutional amendment by punishing attempts to control the services of any person, contrary to the amendment. A resolution was also introduced declaratory of the adoption of the Constitutional amendment.

In the house the Clerk read the roll of members, omitting the Southern representatives. When the call for Tennessee was reached, a member from Tennessee desired to speak. The Clerk refused him, whereupon an animated debate took place. Mr. Brooks protesting against the omission of the members from Tennessee and Virginia, and declaring that if Tennessee were not in the union the President had no right to his place at the White House. The Clerk ruled that the debate was out of order.

The House elected Mr. Schuyler-Colfax Speaker.

Mr. Thaddeus Stevens offered a resolution appointing a joint committee of both Houses to report whether any of the late rebellious States are entitled to representation in either House, with leave to report at any time by bill or otherwise. No member from such States to be admitted into either House until the report is made and finally acted upon by Congress. All papers relating to the representatives from said States to be referred to the committee without debate. The House refused by a large majority to postpone or table this resolution. It had previously been unanimously adopted at a Republican caucus of 124 members of Congress, held at Washington on Saturday, when the Radical Republicans took the lead and carried their points.

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

The report of the Secretary of the Treasury favours the repeal of the Legal Tender Act at the earliest practical moment, but does not urge it as an immediate measure. The paper currency afloat in the United States, including 700,000,000 dols., is likely to be increased. The report favours a decided movement towards the contraction of the currency in order to save the country from wide-spread disaster. It recommends Congress to declare that compound-interest notes shall cease to be a legal tender after maturity, and asks authority to issue six per cent bonds at discretion, for the purpose of retiring the compound interest and United States notes. It also recommends legislation for the reduction of the debt by funding obligations at maturity, and providing for raising the revenues necessary to pay the interest and a certain definite amount annually for the reduction of the principal.

The expenditure for the year ending next June will exceed the receipts by 112,000,000 dols., which is to be provided for by loans. The estimated revenue for the year ending June, 1867, will give a surplus of 11,000,000 dols.

## THE FENIANS.

The Fenian senate was in session at New York, reviewing the conduct of the Fenian executive and officers. In consequence of the Fenian president being about to issue bonds bearing the signature of the agent of the Irish republic, whose appointment the senate had not confirmed, but repudiated, the senate had issued a manifesto declaring such bonds to be invalid and illegal. The senate had called upon the president to send in the name of the agent of the Irish republic for confirmation. The president has not yet complied.

It was reported that the Governor of New Brunswick had received information of an intended Fenian raid upon that province.

## FATAL COLLISION IN THE CHANNEL.

A FATAL collision occurred in the Channel, between Dover and Calais, on the night of Wednesday, the 13th inst. It seems that the Samphire, one of the fine fleet of mail-steamers of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company, on the arrival of the Continental express-train at Dover from London, embarked about seventy passengers and the mails, and at eleven o'clock at night steamed away for Calais. The sea was comparatively calm, but the atmosphere was thick and heavy. When the steamer had performed four miles and a half of her passage, twelve minutes having elapsed from the time she left Dover, an American barque struck her violently on her port bow and cut her well nigh asunder. The barque turned out to be the Fanny Buck, of Boston, bound from Rotterdam to Cardiff. She is of about 500 tons burden, and was in ballast. The violence of the collision was so great that the total wreck of the steamer appeared inevitable, and a rush was made to the small boats, the barque not having stopped to save the lives of the persons on board the steamer; and it was at this juncture that a most melancholy and fatal accident occurred. A Russian Count, in his eager effort to get into the small boat, fell overboard. As he rose to the surface a life-line was thrown to him for his rescue. He grasped it, but, through exhaustion, as he wore a large heavy cloak, he lost his hold and sank. On rising again, Captain Bennett, the commander of the mail-steamers, jumped overboard and passed a line round the body of the drowning Count; but, unhappily, just as he was being raised into the boat, the line slipped from his waist and the Count sank to rise no more. When the shock of the collision was felt, the passengers rushed from the cabins to the deck. The fore-cabin immediately filled with water, but, by the peculiar construction of the steamer, the fore part can be rendered incommunicable with the compartments aft of the engines, otherwise the steamer would have immediately sunk. As it was, however, the vessel was able to keep afloat, though her bulkheads had filled and her bow was under water. On communication being made with the shore, the Belgian mail-boat, just arrived at Dover from Ostend, was sent out, and towed the Samphire to the mouth of Dover harbour, the passengers having been previously landed. The cause of the collision will of course be a matter for official investigation. The steamer had her lights burning brilliantly, and those on board deny that the barque exhibited any lights. On the other hand, two of the crew of the barque, who scrambled on board the steamer, and were landed and received at the Dover Sailors' Home, declare that the barque had her proper lights up, and that they saw the steamer crossing her bows.

From the effects produced upon both vessels, the violence of the collision must have been terrific. The steamer, which is iron-

plated, was stove in right down to the keel, every timber in her appearing to have been loosened. The barque, which was obliged to enter Dover harbour, is also much damaged. The iron-plates of the steamer pierced to a depth of nearly a foot into the barque's timbers at the bow, her stem and cutwater were broken away, and she was stove in at several places, both below and above water. But the worst part of the affair is that it was attended with fatal consequences. On counting up the party two ladies were missed, and as the last which was seen of them was that they were seated in the fore-cabin shortly before the collision, it was supposed that they must have been drowned in that compartment of the vessel. This could not, however, be ascertained until the tide was down and the water ejected from the cabin. As the water left the vessel two ladies were seen floating about in the fore-cabin, and a gentleman sitting upon the bunk. The bodies were removed to the dead-house by the police, when they were identified as those of Miss Meta Baines, the daughter of a clergyman of the Church of England holding a benefice at Yalding, Kent, and Miss Georgiana Keening, a German governess to Miss Baines; the body of the gentleman being supposed to be that of M. Duclercq, a merchant, of Gravelines. An inquest was, of course, held on the bodies, the evidence adduced at which did not appear to impute blame to the crews of either of the vessels, and the jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death." Great praise was awarded to Captain Bennett, of the Samphire, for his coolness and energy after the collision.

## MUSICAL CHAIRS.

THIS is a scientific age, when instruction is artfully combined with amusement, as a powder is concealed by a spoonful of jam, and young people are inveigled into a lesson by a game in disguise. There are geometrical, geographical, geological, historical, arithmetical, chronological, biographical, ethnological, anthropological, botanical, horticultural, vertical, horizontal, and even teetotal games, "for the family circle and young persons;" and it may be confidently anticipated that the toymakers will have invented for the new year a method of learning the principles of political economy and the whole science of statistical tabulations by means of a winter-evening pastime.

Well, we, for our parts, would rather not. If all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, it is equally obvious that something which is neither work nor play will make Master John a conceited young—well, monkey isn't the word; for the monkeys have some sense of humour and the natural advantages of a real good gambol.

What has become of Hunt the Slipper, and where is the real sport of Blind Man's Buff still held in esteem? Who can master all the difficulties of "Old Soldier"? And can any of our readers favour us with the address of an accomplished cryer of forfeits and an appreciative assessor of the redemption fees of suit and service by which they may be recovered? We are so tired of all the intricacies of mechanical toys and elaborate contrivances for dulness that we would as soon think of sitting down to a game of chess as an appropriate glorification of Christmas-tide as join in the painful amusements of the unfortunate children who are doomed to puzzle out a marvellous compliment, to be rewarded at last by a horrible, great, strong, ugly fact, which, having been done up in gilt paper, like a sargarum, is nothing but a dead weight, for which no proper place can be found, and which every wise person will put on one side as soon as possible. No; we are off to join the real children, the merry little ones, who go in for "Oranges and Lemons," or "I had a little dog." Then we will all have a jolly round game at "One old Ox opening Oysters," just to rest ourselves for "My Lady's Toilet." Somebody says that "Musical Chairs" is more lively, and that then we shan't have the bother of spinning the plate. Ah, well, there's something in that; for, to tell the truth, we're a little stiff in the back since that last touch of lumbago, and stooping double, either to spin a plate or to catch a plate already spinning, is apt to give one "a crick," to say nothing of the danger of splitting the knee of one's best dress trousers.

"Musical chairs" be it then. Come, Miss Claxton, sit down at the piano. And now let us put the chairs straight, and everybody take a seat.

Off we go—

"Hokey pokey wankey fum,  
Ri too looral looral lum,  
Fol de riddley doo de dum,  
The King of the ————  
Organ Grinder.  
Da de doo, doo de dum."

Change! change! Now then, Master Tom, don't be quite so rough. Run, Kitty, run! Oh, you little puss, to pop down in the chair before me! Oh, fie! Miss Blank, fie! to see a young lady sit down on a gentleman's knee when she thought nobody was looking! Oh! I never!

Poor Mary Anne! Who tied her streamers to the back of the chair? Never mind, Master Willy, you've pricked your own fingers with a hairpin, and serve you right!

"In the Strand! In the Strand!"

What a thing it is that I should have felt that twinge of lumbago again, just at the wrong moment! And so here I am, left out, and a forfeit to pay—

"I wish I was with Nancy!"

"Heigho! says Rowley.

With a Rowley, Poley, Gammon, and Spin-again."

Hi! hi! Off we go again! Keep up the tune, Miss Claxton. Here we are all tumbling together in a heap of torn muslins, tangled ringlets, flying tresses, broken combs, and flushed young faces, from which come such peals of ringing laughter that the other music—that at the piano—is drowned altogether.

"Hurrah for musical chairs!" say we. They're a capital remedy for lumbago. And now, who's for a game at "Birds, Beasts, and Fishes?"

## JACK AT CHRISTMAS.

It is all very well to sing patriotic naval songs vaunting our confidence in "Hearts of Oak" and "British-built seventy-fours," to the accompaniment of a patent cottage piano, in a snug, well-curtained drawing-room, or to declare, in a blatant baritone voice, and with our feet on the fender, that a "tight little craft and good sea room" are alone necessary for our complete satisfaction.

We may even go so far, under the influence of vocal sentiment and a festive occasion, as to regard ourselves in the light of those jovial heroes, Tom and Bill, who congratulate each other on being at sea in a stiff nor'-wester, and so escaping the danger of flying tiles and chimney-pots; but we cannot help feeling that this is a little too much even for drawing-room enthusiasm. The fact is, that we seldom hear a sailor sing these songs without a sort of half-sad half-humorous grimace; and even when some old salt is quavering away, there is a twinkle in his eye, as he regards the assembled company, which expresses quite plainly, "You Gentlemen of England who sit at home at ease, how little do you think about the absolute monotony and unchanging slavery, the discomfort and the frequent depressing influences, which are all so much worse than even the danger of the seas."

Have you ever really witnessed that jolly life afloat of which so much has been said and sung? Have you ever known a sailor of a few years' standing who has not been a serious if not a rather solemn man, with a sort of robust melancholy about him? The skylarking period is pretty soon over, and the wild orgies, which are, happily, now growing more rare, but which were once characteristic of Jack ashore, were but the ebullitions of long pent-up gloom; the protest which was increased tenfold by the shameful neglect of owners and captains to the most ordinary health and comfort of the men, against hardship, much of which was incidental to a sea life, but the frequent depressing influences, which are all so much worse than even the danger of the seas.

there were only a few hands, will have had ample opportunity of witnessing the jollity of the crew even on what may be called festive occasions.

On deck, washing or mending clothes when the weather is calm or the ship is making way with a steady breeze, is about the best time the poor fellows have of it; and then, as well as on some such anniversary as Christmas Day, or the captain's birthday, the cook may put a few plums into the usual duff, and two or three bottles of beer, or an extra glass of grog, may come from the officers' cabin; but, unless it be for the reversion of the leaveings from the cabin-table, or some old fowl which is a little too tough for a roast, they can count on no change from the salt junk from which most sailors have seen a snuffbox carved, with a lid and all complete.

If you happen to be on board, and would like to go forward and see how the men are enjoying themselves, you may do so, and welcome. Let us suppose that a piece of uncommon good fortune has contributed to raise their spirits. Say that a sucking-pig has died, and that they have been permitted to make the best of it for dinner. Here they all sit, with backs bent, elbows on knees, and heads well down to keep out of the way of the baulks and bulkheads, each man regarding the other with a fixed stare amidst the smoke from his pipe, as if he could see quite through him and were seriously examining some object on the other side.

Happy is he who has a book that has not been overhauled a dozen times already. But whether or not, sailors are marvellously patient, and will listen to a yarn till every auditor knows it by heart; nay, they like it all the better then; for they can sit without the trouble of thinking, and anticipate the points in the narrative with a sort of soothing appreciation, which enables them to sew, or otherwise employ their hands at the same time.

There is a wonderful sense of honour among these sea-dogs, and no man thinks of taking a messmate's yarn and telling it for his own, even though he may, by constant listening, know it better than the original narrator. It could be wished that "unhappy folks on shore" were equally scrupulous, and then one or two good stories of mine— But that is neither here nor there.

"Come, Tom, rouse out, you lazy old beggar, and give us a yarn. Dash my buttons! we're all as mute as stockfishes."

Tom. Shan't. You be hanged!

Bill. Why, you burnt son of a gun, what d'ye mean? Joe, just take this sail-needle, and make a double cast through his starn if he won't speak.

Joe. Now, lookie here; give us a yarn, Tom, or I'm blest if I don't go and ask cap'n for a dose o' salts for yer.

Tom. Well, I do know no yarns. Why don't yer tell one yerself? Such a set of burnt mopsticks I never see; what'll yer have, bust yer?

Bill. Oh, give us that about the blackie's ghost out upon the bowsprit.

Tom. What do you always want that one for? I tell you, I see it myself.

All. Ay, ay! we know that, Tom. It's all very well to say there aint such things; but them as say so aint been to sea.

And then follows a story beginning, "Well, you know that was when I shipped from Liverpool, three years ago, when I was lodging at the Cat and Bell—you know the Cat and Bell, down away there, close to"—and so forth.

If anyone wishes to know what are the "jolly staves" sung at sea, he need only ask any of these fellows to give a chant—

'Twas all on board the Hesperus,  
(free expectation.)  
Six found a watery grave.  
(more expectation.)

And so on, sad songs of a dozen verses each, with choruses the low, monotonous growl or the melancholy wail of which seem to pervade the ship like the echo of some cry of a forlorn seawaith.

In the Royal Navy things are a little different; for there, in large vessels, the men make up an army. But even they are divided into little coteries, which go on in much the same fashion; and though the "grub" is more regular and better than that in the merchant service—notwithstanding the fact that beef rejected as being unfit for the supply of convict prisons is bought by navy contractors for the victualling-yards—it is only when they are on some convenient station that the men have any of those luxuries which we on shore look upon as absolute necessities—at all events, at Christmas tide.

Great is Jack's glorification, however, when in the Mediterranean, or say off Tangiers, he hears the pipe and the order "Shore-boat hands!" for then he knows that there will be "soft tack," and the chance of a fowl or a piece of mutton in the pot, and the Christmas plum duff will have its regular accompaniments. With what a critical eye the grizzled old bo'sen's mate regards the legs of the stringy and muscular bird for which the mild, picturesque Muselman chaffers, with wonder that those great, rough, brown-bearded men should laugh and play like overgrown boys, and yet, somehow, with faces the cogitative seriousness of which is only just rippled with their hoarse laughter!

But they understand each other, too; for there is a common language in money; and Jack has a shot or two in the locker which he may spend worse than in making some additions to his Christmas dinner at sea.

THE GREAT INDIAN SHAWL SALE.—The annual sale of these luxurious shawls is just concluded. The competition between English and Continental buyers not being so keen as usual, the result was not beneficial to the importers. Prices of all kinds ranged a little lower than in any former sale; fine long cashmeres brought from 60 to 150 guineas; squares, 30 to 100 guineas. Several of these fine lots were knocked down to Messrs. Farmer and Rogers, of Regent-street, who were fortunate in securing a great many good-quality Dacca-worked shawls at very low prices. The new patterns are handsome and varied in style, and this description of shawl is likely to continue as fashionable as ever.

EXTRAORDINARY IF TRUE.—At Warsaw, a wedding party, on their return from church, found a police agent in the house, who, uninformed, seated himself among the guests, ate and drank, and then sent his comrades in succession to fill his place. He ordered a young lady to play the piano, and to dance with him. The people of the house became indignant, whereupon he placed them all under arrest, and marched them off to prison. The police then returned to the house, and indulged in an orgie. The next morning, the imprisoned party were brought before the Commissary of Police, who simply dismissed them, advising them to return quietly home, and not complain to the superior authorities if they did not wish to draw down upon themselves further unpleasantness.

## THE FIVE SENSES.

WHY five? Why not seven, ten, twelve—or, as has been lately asked by an eminent philosopher, why more than one sense, answering to what we call feeling, and of which the rest are but modifications? All that could be said upon the subject—and that is a great deal—would involve an inquiry into the reasonableness of that marvellous old numerical mysticism which attached actual properties, influences, and even necessities to numbers, from the indivisible unit to the perfection of seven, the impenetrable completeness of three, and the geometrical community of odd and even, not only with the symmetry of the physical but with the operations of the immaterial world. Say what we will, if we go back to the most simple inquiry of all, and thence come to the conclusion that number, as such, is, like space and time—but a condition of our present symbolical existence, and not an eternal or immortal verity; we may still be conscious of some quality which is represented by number, though the mere finite and measurable division implied by numeration is but phenomenal. In other words, though the numbers three, five, or seven may be of no eternal significance, we may be, and those of us who have thought on the subject are, conscious of a threeness, a fineness, and a sevenness in nature, or in the condition of things perceived by us, including ourselves.

If this should appear a little wildly metaphysical, which to many people is but saying that it is utter nonsense, it may be retorted that the five senses belong to the world above mere physics, and, if there be any real division between the material and the immaterial which is itself extremely doubtful, what we call feeling (and under





"THE SENSES: FEELING."—(DRAWN BY MISS CLAXTON.)

this term all the five senses may be included if we alter the word to contact, with or without affinity) is but another name for emotion conveyed by instruments. We may either use or cut ourselves with, a five-bladed knife, but the knife has no personal interest in the process. On that wonderful organ with five stops, that we call our body, and which should be attuned to the music of the spheres, we are liable to introduce an inharmonious sharp or flat, to say nothing of going into a whole jumble of discords when we ought to be practising our scales. You see concord and discord lie so close together, even when we call them respectively pleasure and pain.

Sometimes other people interfere and set up their own tune in opposition, and then, unless we can somehow come to a resolution of harmony or play a lively fugue, in comes howling confusion and dismay for one or both of us, with, perhaps, the ear of half a lifetime set on edge by the brutal persistency of some pretentious and selfish performer with only one tune and no knowledge of music.

Well would it be for us if we were in perfect accord, and that the five senses, considered as the stops of an instrument, were always under the control of the five fingers symbolising knowledge, power, love, reason, and the thumb of will, which binds all the other four.

But the reader is perhaps already regarding all this as mock mysticism, and thinking perchance that "this way madness lies;" well all that can be said is, that a hundred thousand times more than this has been said of the power, meaning, and influence of numbers; and, therefore, to escape fresh danger, let us take the five senses in their common acceptation, remembering, however, that pleasure and pain lie so near together that the memory of one is often mistaken for the shadow of the other; remembering, too, that, like the sticks of a fan, they diverge from one common centre, and that the first of the senses is



LE REVELLON: A CHRISTMAS CUSTOM IN THE NORTH OF FRANCE.—(FROM A SKETCH BY H. D. GRISSET)—SEE PAGE 391.



## FEELING.

Was it suggested that pleasure and pain lie close? Well, imagine our rustic beauty following the delightful current of her "maiden meditation fancy free" on a dull, wintry day, just before a black frost had stopped the flow of that bubbling spring which her rosy foot stirred into fresh ripples on the bright, sultry July morning when our sketch was taken. Not without laced half-boots and good, stout stockings of homespun would she venture to the slippery margin of that icy pool, and even then every toe would be rosy with incipient chilblains, while round that sun-burnt neck, now so recklessly open to the soft, summer wind, a red worsted comforter would be wound to meet the long flaps of the dairy bonnet. Nodding musings then, while the pitcher swings carelessly between thumb and finger and the leaves whisper secrets to the tinkling of the water amongst the moss and stones. A stern grip of the jug-handle, lest it should slip away from the numbed digits; a still sterner application of the end of the woollen comforter to the exasperating tip of a nose from which sensation has departed; and a measured trudge through the snow or wet to the house door, with a return of pleasure at sight of the fire, where "a body may get some feeling into her fingers, to say nothing of her toes."

One comfort is that there is no deception in this matter; she doesn't fancy that it's pleasant: in so much she is better off than the town lady who is just preparing for her wintry work by being dressed to within an inch of her life for a party, where she will vacillate in uncertainty for a whole evening upon a draughty staircase between a crowded supper-room and a ball-room, in which spectators are compelled to sit close to the wall, with their crinolines packed under them and their feet beneath the narrow rout seat, of which the very canes vibrate with an alarming suggestion of the uncertainty of modern building.

"Such a delightful evening, I'm sure!" says this suffering creature, as she at last hears the welcome announcement of the carriage, which she heartily regrets not having ordered three hours before. Oh! those dreadfully-tight satin or morocco leather slippers! Oh! that inflexible bodice with a lace of fiddle-string, which, if anybody were to cut it, would go off with a booming sound, like a musical effect in a nautical drama! Oh! the weary hours that it takes to bedeck the reveller who "has been really quite gay" this season! And oh! what gaiety to sit there loaded, so to speak, with fetters in the shape of jewellery, and adorned with fashionable instruments of torture invented by the modistes for the punish-

ment of womankind! Well, to parody the words of the poet,  
Tight stays do not a prison make,  
Nor crinoline a cage.  
And so, when we sigh and say we wish we had as much

pleasure as Mrs. Blank or Miss Dash, we must all believe each other, in spite of the evidence of our mere senses.

## MR. TOM TAYLOR.

PERHAPS the most prolific and most successful dramatist of the present day—both as author and as adapter—is Mr. Tom Taylor, whose Portrait this week illustrates our pages. The bills of one or other of the metropolitan theatres almost continually contain the announcement of a piece of some sort or other by Mr. Taylor. His productions have been so numerous that we cannot afford space to mention them all; but among his greatest successes may be enumerated the comedies of "Still Waters Run Deep," "Victims," "An Unequal Match," "The Contested Election," "The Overland Route," "Our American Cousin," and the very successful drama of the "Ticket-of-Leave Man." His latest production—an adaptation of Miss Braddon's novel, "The Outcasts," is now being performed at the Olympic Theatre. Mr. Taylor was born at Sunderland, in 1817, and educated at the Grange School, one of high repute. He afterwards went through two sessions at Glasgow University, in the course of which he received three gold medals and several other prizes. From Glasgow he proceeded, in 1837, to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took a degree as a junior optime, and in the first class of the classical tripos; and was subsequently elected a Fellow of Trinity. Mr. Taylor next held, for two years, the Professorship of English Language and Literature at University College, London. He was called to the bar of the Inner Temple, in November, 1845, and went the Northern Circuit until his appointment to the assistant secretaryship of the Board of Health, in March, 1850. In 1854, upon the reconstruction of that board, Mr. Taylor was appointed secretary, with a salary of £1000 per annum. Besides his single-handed dramatic works, Mr. Taylor, in conjunction with Mr. Charles Reade, has written some elegant comedies, and has contributed to *Punch* several articles in prose and verse, remarkable for their classic verve. He also compiled and edited the "Autobiography of B. R. Haydon," from the journals of that painter, published in 1853; the "Autobiography and Correspondence of the late C. R. Leslie, R.A.," published in 1859. In 1865 he published the "Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds," left incomplete by the late Mr. Leslie, R.A. Mrs. Tom Taylor is known, under her maiden name of Miss Laura Barker, as a musical composer of marked originality and power.



TOM TAYLOR, ESQ., DRAMATIST.—(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY J. AND C. WATKINS.)



SCENE FROM "HENRY DUNBAR," AT THE OLYMPIC THEATRE.



### "HENRY DUNBAR," AT THE OLYMPIC.

THE extraordinary popularity of some novels is often a matter of surprise, not only to practised critics, but to general readers. When they have arrived, diligently and industriously, at the welcome word *finis* in the third volume they frequently ask of themselves, "Why did I read this book? What is there in it? Has it taught me anything? Has its perusal given me any pleasure? Is there a story in it? Are the characters treated of anything like persons in real life? Are the incidents probable, or even interesting?" And the answer may often be given in the negative. There was no reason for reading the book—there is nothing in it. Its perusal gives no pleasure. It has no story. The characters are unreal and traditional; the incidents improbable and uninteresting. *Per contra*: the book contains a great quantity of language, and all the language is excessively genteel. The incidents are genteel, and so are the characters and their conversations. It is an excellent novel for an invalid lady of mature years. Its perusal is unlikely to increase the action of her pulse, or to bring half a tear to either of her eyes. Finally, it is well bound, and a pretty book to lie upon a table and to contemplate from the outside.

In the popularity of Miss Braddon's novels there is nothing extraordinary. She has the art of constructing an intensely interesting story, of ingeniously complicating incidents and situations, of telling her story by means of characters who are real live flesh-and-blood men and women, and who talk, and feel, and think, and act like men and women. The motive power of the emotions of her personages is strong; and, when they come into collision, their action and dialogue are dramatic. To all these desiderata she adds the charms of a lively, graphic style—a style with plenty of roundness and colour in it. A large amount of twaddle is nowadays talked against what is called "sensation." A novel is a novel, and not an essay; and he or she is the best novelist who holds the most complete sway over the feelings of the reader.

Miss Braddon's novels are not only popular as books. A proof of their vitality, if proof were wanted, is their invariable success when they are adapted for the stage and converted into dramas. The latest theatrical version of this lady's works is the drama now playing at the Olympic. The novel of the "Outcasts" is so well known, and the notice we gave of the production of "Henry Dunbar" so recent, that it is unnecessary to enter into any description of its plot, incident, or dramatic personae. We need therefore only point out that our Artist has chosen for the subject of his illustration the last scene of the play, where the punishment of crime, despite the talent and audacity of the criminal, the complicity of his former companion in guilt, and the heroic self-devotion of his innocent, unhappy daughter, is brought home to the murderer of the real ill-fated Henry Dunbar.

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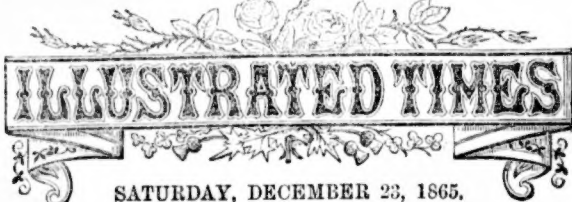
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1865.

### CHRISTMAS GREETING.

WE have once more the satisfaction of greeting our readers at this the season of the great Christian commemoration. This is a pleasure which we have now enjoyed for a good many years; and each time Christmas comes round we feel more and more deeply that it is a privilege of high value to be enabled to offer our cordial greetings and good wishes to those who have travelled with us through the events which have transpired since first we formed acquaintanceship with the portion of the public whom it is our lot to address week after week. Most of our readers, we hope, are old friends; some may be new ones; but to all, old and new, we gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity of once again wishing a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

### POWERS OF RAILWAY COMPANIES.

THE "railway interest" is now one of the most powerful influences in Parliament and one of the most autocratic institutions in the country. Railway directors dominate us at every turn. We cannot travel except on their lines and on their terms. Our lives are in their hands. We hold our property merely by their sufferance. If they desire our land for extensions or improvements of their lines, we must, in most cases, submit to the conditions they choose to offer. It was not always so. When railways were young and feeble, they had to submit to the exactions of owners of land, who were not in all cases very reasonable in their demands. Now that railways have waxed strong, they pay the general public off for the wrongs, real or fancied, to which they had to submit in their youth. This is not quite fair, though it may be very natural—according to the ordinary practices of frail humanity. "Spurning the base degrees by which they did ascend" to their present might and influence, railway directors play the tyrant with their subjects—the public. "It is excellent to have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant." But that is what the railway companies do. They make what lines they list; they run what trains they list; they keep what time they list; they charge what fares they list; they provide what accommodation they list; they employ what sort of servants they list; and they smash up travellers as they list. Even when they contend with each other before Parliamentary Committees, their objects are not to provide the best accommodation for the travelling public and to afford the greatest amount of facility to the trade of the country; but, how to circumvent landowners, and to thwart rival companies—how to "choke off" competition and frighten poachers from their special preserves. And no means are left untried to accomplish these ends. All this comes of railway companies having a giant's strength, and using it like a giant—tyrannously. But is there no means of meeting force with force? Railway companies are now soliciting the country—through its Parliament—for all sorts of privileges

and powers. Can we not manage to make some terms of advantage with them while they are compelled to play the part of suitors? It will be impossible to do so after they have got the powers they ask for.

There will be an almost unprecedented number of railway bills before Parliament in the next Session; and nearly all the great companies are interested in the privileges sought. Why should not a clause or clauses be introduced into each bill binding the companies to provide better carriages, to keep time more punctually, to exercise more care in the management of their traffic, to keep the permanent ways and signal apparatuses in better order, and to make directors personally responsible for accidents and delays caused by their mismanagement? We cannot compel them to pay their servants better; but we might make it incumbent on them to employ no one who could not pass a certain reasonable examination as to fitness for the duty assigned to him; and thus, by raising the standard of capacity, we should raise, indirectly, the standard of remuneration, for of course thoroughly competent and intelligent men would not serve for the same salaries as the ignorant and incapable. We might also impose some restriction upon the hours of labour exacted from railway servants, and so to some extent check the danger of accidents occurring through the exhaustion of signalmen and others, as they very often do. These are points to which the attention of the public and of Parliament, and particularly of the Royal Commission on railways, should be directed; and, whatever may be the means adopted, some protection should be given to the public against the carelessness, superciliousness, want of punctuality, and indifference to the comfort and safety of travellers which railway directors now display. The time is opportune; the will should not be wanting. There is no doubt as to the grievances under which the public labour; there should be as little as to the application of remedies.

### SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

EARL GRANVILLE, President of the Council, will succeed Lord Palmerston as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

THE PRIVATE FORTUNE left by King Leopold is estimated at £3,200,000 sterling.

SPAIN, it is said, has accepted the mediation of England in the dispute with Chili.

THE COLLIERIES OF SOUTH YORKSHIRE threaten to strike for ten per cent higher wages.

MR. MURRAY is about to publish a new work by Sir Bulwer Lytton, to be called "The Lost Tales of Miletus."

A SUPPLEMENTARY CONVENTION to the Treaty of Gastein has been concluded between Austria and Prussia, relating to the garrison arrangements at Rendsburg.

SOME WIT has announced, as the latest telegram from Rome, that the Pope's bull had got the rinderpest.

A NEW TRIAL has been applied for in the case of "Yelverton v. the Saturday Review."

LORD WODEHOUSE has dismissed Mr. Marquis Governor of Richmond prison, Dublin, from which Stephens made his escape; and has intimated that he will in future appoint the prison officials himself.

PROFESSOR AGASSIZ, who is making a scientific expedition along the Amazon in Brazil, reports some singular discoveries. He writes under date of Sept. 8, and says he has found over a hundred new species of fish in the Amazon, although he has examined scarcely one third of that river. He is now ascending the stream, and will ultimately visit Peru.

THE RIGHT REV. DR. FRANCIS JEUNE, Bishop of Peterborough, will take his seat as a Spiritual Peer on the opening of Parliament, a vacancy having been caused by the death of the Right Rev. Dr. Graham, Bishop of Chester. Dr. Jacobson will not be entitled to a seat in the House of Lords until a vacancy arises in a diocese other than Canterbury, York, London, Durham, or Winchester.

A TREATY OF COMMERCE between Great Britain and Austria has at last been concluded. The articles were signed on Saturday last. The maximum duty is to be twenty-five per cent ad valorem, to be reduced to twenty per cent in 1870. Austria reserves power to make further reductions when the definitive treaty is signed in March, if the British Government yields the concessions asked on corn and wine.

THE BOARD OF TRADE, through the Home Secretary, has called upon the Lords Lieutenant of the different counties to endeavour to ensure an accurate return from the farmers of the amount of live stock now in the kingdom. It is proposed that the information should be collected by means of the officers of the Inland Revenue, and forms are furnished for the farmers to fill up, which it is hoped will be done without trouble or difficulty.

THE INQUEST on the bodies of the engine-driver and fireman who were precipitated into the Swansea Dock along with the train they were driving has resulted in the jury returning a verdict of "manslaughter" against Evan Davies, who started the train, and against one of the signalmen. They also recommended that the excessive hours of attendance for the signalmen should be shortened.

THE PRUSSIAN GOVERNMENT has recently dispatched a circular to the States belonging to the Zollverein containing the draught of a treaty of commerce between Italy and the Zollverein, and recommending their adhesion to the same.

COUNT EULENBURG, who was accused of being concerned in the death of M. Ott, it is now officially notified, has been sentenced to confinement for five months and a half.

MR. J. S. MILL, M.P., has expressed his approval of Mr. Beal's scheme for the reformation of the government of the metropolis.

THE HON. WILLIAM GREY, Secretary of Embassy at the Court of the Tuileries, died of cholera, in Paris, on Tuesday. Mr. Grey was a brother of Lord Grey. An excellent man of business, and of large experience in diplomacy, he might have risen to the highest rank in his profession.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM.—It is understood that the Government has decided to bring forward a measure to reform the constitution of the British Museum, and that Mr. Panizzi has been induced to remain in his office until the beginning of March. Mr. Panizzi resigned last summer, and obtained a superannuation allowance of a special character. He was to have left the Museum at Christmas. What the nature of the reform is to be—whether there is to be a small council, as recommended by Lord Ellesmere's commission in 1855; or a director, as recommended by Lord Langdale; or a Parliamentary Minister, as advocated by Lord Henry Lennox—is not yet known. Many different kinds of successors to Mr. Panizzi have been named—some of them obviously unlikely. We have heard the names of Sir Edmund Head, Sir Francis Sandford, Sir Frederick Madden, Mr. Winter Jones, Mr. Newton, and others mentioned.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

THE MAIN DRAINAGE OF THE METROPOLIS.—The members of the Metropolitan Board of Works paid a visit on Saturday to Pileston Marshes, their object being to lay the foundation-stone of the Abbey Mills pumping-station, a building which is to rival the works at Crossness, and in which will be the means of raising the sewage of the low level of London to the great high and middle level sewers. On arriving at the ground the party immediately descended into what appeared to be the bowels of the earth, some 40 ft. below the surface of the ground, and 12 ft. below the bed of the River Lea. The company passed through some of the completed sewer, which in its length of five miles from the Tower has to go under two branches of the Lea and under the river itself. The subterranean passage, which is about 12 ft. high, was most brilliantly lighted, and led to the site of the station. Mr. Bazalgette, the engineer, read a statement, which was engrossed for insertion in the stone, showing that the sewer of which this was the mouth would drain 25½ square miles, and would have to raise about 5,000,000 cubic feet of sewage a day, and that the engine-power, about 1140 horse, was provided for the raising of 15,000 cubic feet per minute, so that all storm rains could be safely carried off. The stone was then formally laid, amidst loud cheers, by Mr. Freeman, the deputy chairman of the main drainage committee, who specially referred to the great good which the completion of the work would bestow upon the people of the metropolis in giving them a purified air to live in, and to aiding them in attaining good health. Mr. E. Cooper, the resident engineer, is engaged in carrying out the works.

### THE LOUNGER AT THE CLUBS.

THIS is your Christmas number. Let me contribute something to make your readers smile. In a capital book—Rev. Isaac Taylor on "Words and Places"—I find this:—"The surnames Hayward and Howard are corruptions of Hogwarden (thus, Hogwarden, Hogward, Howard, &c.)—an officer elected annually to see that the swine in the common pastures were duly provided with rings (in their snouts) to keep them from grubbing up the turf and were prevented from straying." This from Mr. Taylor, and his authority is confirmed by the fact that in many towns and villages of England a Howard is still elected—not now, though, to ring the snouts of swine, but to impound wandering cattle, including pigs. I myself have assisted in electing the Town Howard in bygone days. What, then, do "all the Howards" descend from hogwardens? It would seem so—even the great Norfolk family, the head of which is premier Duke and Earl of England, and hereditary Earl Marshal, and Chief Butler. But we must not confound hogwardens with swineherds, a specimen of which class Scott has given us in Gurth, Cedric the Saxon's swineherd. The swineherd was a serf, whereas the hogwarden, or, as we have it now, the Howard, was and is to this time a municipal officer. Mr. Hannay tells us that the Norfolk Howards certainly are not of Norman origin. True, they were here before the Normans came, as the name proves. It would be interesting if we could trace the history of this notable house back to the first hogwarden. Very likely he was as proud of his office when he was elected as my Lord Duke is of his Earl Marshal's baton; and though he could not have dreamed, as he wandered in the forest glades, looking after neglectful swineherds, and impounding or ringing straying hogs, that his family would rise to the height to which it has climbed, yet we may well believe that, having got his foot on a round of the official ladder, he resolved to get higher. At all events, they have been good climbers these Howards. In 1297, or thereabouts, there was a Sir William Howard, a judge. In 1457, a Sir Robert married the daughter of Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, and then jumped at a bound nearly to the top of the ladder.

And there are climbers now as there were when the first of the Howards got his foot upon the first rung of Ambition's ladder; and here are two just about to mount to what is considered a very high position. Sir Francis Baring is to go up to the House of Lords as Lord Northbrook, and Sir John Romilly as Lord Romilly. The families of both these gentlemen began to rise, though, only a few years ago. The heralds, with all their ingenuity, will never be able to make out a pedigree for them from Norman knights. The Barings descend from the Rev. Franz Baring, a Lutheran minister of the last century, living at Bremen. His grandson became an eminent London merchant, and obtained a baronetcy here in England. How or why, I know not; probably because he was very rich, for the "house of Baring" from the first has been a mine of wealth. I know not how many princely fortunes have been drawn out of it. Lord Ashburton is a Baring, and was formerly a member of this great firm. Sir Francis Baring's money, too, all came from this City mine. Then there is Thomas Baring, the member for Huntingdon, who is now head of the City house. There is also a Bingham Baring, member for Marlborough. All these are heads of separate families, all more or less wealthy, and all stems of the produce of the old Bremen sap root. Truly, a remarkable family. That City house may be likened to the garden of the Hesperides, with its trees bearing golden apples. The Romillys have no family history, or, at least, none of which any chronicles have been published. The founder of the family was that great and good man Sir Samuel Romilly, who died in 1818. All we know of his ancestry is this. He was the son of a jeweller, who was the son of a wax-bleacher, who was forced by the persecutions consequent upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes to leave France and settle in London. There is no disputing taste. Heralds tell us that the noblest descent is that which can be traced direct to some Norman marauder. Some of our nobles are very proud of a left-handed extraction from a loose-living monarch; and, failing these, others are consolable if the heralds can but give them a pedigree beginning a few centuries back. But I—my reason—would desire no better genealogical honour than to be able to say I am the son of the great and good Sir Samuel Romilly. But would it not be better still to be a great and good man than to be the descendant of one? Our notions on this subject are strangely inverted. The Lansdowne family have exchanged the name of Petty for Fitzmaurice; and yet that William Petty who was the son of an old Romey clothier, and founded the family, was really a greater man than any of his descendants. But then the Petty family has no hoar of antiquity about it, and therefore the family silently drop it. And in three Peerages that lie before me little or no mention is made of William Petty; but in one I am gravely told that the family descends in direct line from Fitztho, castellan of Windsor under William the Norman! *O vanitas vanitatis!* as Thackeray often sighed.

A change, it appears, is to be made in the office of Junior Lord, or, as he is sometimes called, the Civil Lord, of the Admiralty. The title of this functionary is to be Financial Lord, and his salary is to be raised from £1000 a year to £2000. He is to devote his time exclusively to finance. Will the Government then take care that he shall be well qualified for his duties? It would seem that he is to be head of the financial department, and have to supervise the whole of the Admiralty accounts. If so, he ought to be a well-trained accountant; for to send a man, untrained and ignorant of accounts, into the finance department, would be like turning a bull into a china-shop. The Civil Lord whose power was limited often did a deal of mischief by his interference. But if an ignorant man should be invested with supreme power, the mischief he may do is incalculable. Surely such an officer ought, before his appointment, to submit to a civil service examination. But, strange enough, whilst no clerk can now be admitted into the civil service till his qualifications have been tested, "the governing classes" have to go through no such ordeal. It is said that they are born with silver spoons in their mouths, and I suppose that it is presumed they are born with a knowledge of double entry in their heads.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* has set flying a curious canard. It tells us that, in consequence of a report at Calcutta that the River Hooghly had silted up, the Peninsular and Oriental Company advertised that the Moulton's departure was indefinitely postponed, and the Post Office authorities put off the mail. This report, says the *P. M. G.*, was raised by speculators to lift up the Port Canning shares. Now, that there was such a report raised is probably true; but it is not true that in consequence of that report the Moulton's departure was indefinitely postponed. The truth is that the Peninsular and Oriental Company's managers had received official intelligence on the 9th of November that the river was unusually low, not silted up; and in consequence of this report the Moulton, which should have left on the 9th, did not start till the 12th, and in its passage down it found the river still low; indeed, at one place it touched the bottom. There was no hoax, then, as the *P. M. G.* supposes; or, at all events, the authorities were not hoaxed. They acted upon official reports, and not upon mere rumour. The probability is that the fact that the Moulton was delayed gave rise to the rumour that the Hooghly was silted up; and then the stockjobbers assiduously spread it—much exaggerated, no doubt—to serve their purposes. The pilots on the Hooghly are the best in the world, and always keep their employers well acquainted with the state of the river.

The Christmas numbers of the various periodicals are now out, and, on the whole, are very good. The fancy for peculiar-sounding titles which has prevailed for some years past still holds its ground. Thus we have "Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions" as the title of the Christmas number of *All the Year Round*; "Waiting for the Host" refers to *Chambers's Journal*; "The Twelfth Finger of the Left Hand but One" is the extravagantly absurd—but designedly so—name given to the Christmas number of *Fun*; and so on. I cannot afford time to notice all the extras which lie before me, but must confine myself to the two which strike me as being the best. "Doctor Marigold" is one of the finest bits of writing which Mr. Dickens has ever penned and



that is saying a great deal. It is indeed a masterly sketch, full of wit, humour, sarcasm, and yet without replete with pathos and fine natural feeling. I confidently predict that "Dr. Marigold's Prescriptions," as they have already been extensively taken under all the circumstances recommended, and others besides, will long be regarded as a standard by which to judge future Christmas numbers of Mr. Dickens's popular periodical. Notwithstanding its singular name—which, I suppose, is intended as a caricature of the out-of-the-way style of title—the Christmas number of *Fun* is admirable, and is really a wonderful twopennyworth. It consists of twenty-four pages of tales, poems, &c., by some of our most favourite writers, including the editor, Mr. T. Hood, Mr. W. T. Robertson, Arthur Sketchley, Mr. W. Brough, Mr. T. Archer, Mr. Schwenk Gilbert, Mr. C. W. Scott, Mr. H. J. Byron, Mr. E. L. Blanchard, Mr. H. S. Leigh, Mr. S. Lover, &c. The paper is finely toned and of superior quality, and the printing is clear and readable. Several of the contributions are nicely illustrated; and, altogether, "The Twelfth Hand on the Left Finger"—Slay, that isn't right. "Every fellow knows" that people don't wear their hands on their fingers, but their fingers on their hands. I must try again. Well, then, "The Twelfth Finger of the Left Hand but One"—now I have it, but it's a puzzler—deserves, as I understand it has secured, an immense success. It is "going off"—to borrow the language of "the trade"—spendily. The clever posse of young authors who have produced this first good Christmas number of *Fun* have added another rose to their literary chaplets. May they wear them long, and year by year gather fresh flowers!

At this season of the year fancy articles of all descriptions come prominently into notice, and novelties of one sort or another are brought out in profusion. I am glad to observe that this year a more than ordinary amount of taste has been exhibited in the production of these articles of *de luxe*. But perhaps the most tasteful of all that I have seen are several series of chromo-prints and paper ornaments, published by Mr. Laidlaw, of Bury-court, St. Mary-axe. These beautiful little articles for ladies' boudoirs and drawing-room tables are really very superior works of art, and consist of a great variety of admirably embossed and coloured cards, cut-out and coloured paper ornaments, scent cases in the form of purses, ladies' bags, bottles, fusee-cases, cakes of soap, and so on. There is also a series of sheets of conical designs, entitled respectively "Streets of London," "Cockney Celebrities," "Heads of the People," &c., on which great pains have evidently been bestowed, and which exhibit various phases of the human face in a not particularly divine but exceedingly funny guise. The gem of the collection, however, I consider "The Invisible Fairy Mirror." Outwardly, it appears to be simply a paper box—very carefully and nicely ornamented, however. On the front of the box is placed a small knob for the purpose of pulling out a drawer, which being drawn forward to its full extent, an oval on the lid of the box has been made to ascend, and a little looking-glass in a gilt frame is revealed. In the drawer there is a beautiful panoramic scene, which can either be left in its place or removed, and the space appropriated to keeping cartes de visite, &c. All Mr. Laidlaw's articles are got up with the utmost taste, skill, and care, and are so very pretty that it is no wonder they have met with the immense success which has hitherto attended them, and which is certain to increase as they become better known.

While talking of articles of stationery, I may mention that Mr. James Blackwood, of Paternoster-row, has just issued a most useful and convenient Scribbling Diary for 1866. The diary is inclosed in a stout wrapper, on which are printed an almanack, Post-Office regulations, &c. The diary—which, by-the-way, is foolscap folio size—is interleaved with blotting-paper, and has the days of the month and week printed; the whole carefully ruled, several lines being appropriated for entering under each day. This diary is very convenient for lying on the counting-house or office table, and must be of great service to merchants, professional men, and others who require to keep careful memoranda of each day's work. To my brother loungers I particularly recommend it. We semi-idle people, whose whole duty in life is to gossip and listen to gossip, are apt to forget engagements and duties, and this diary constitutes an excellent remembrance. "I have found it answer, Sirs, and so may you."

Lounging down Bond-street, after my wont, my attention was attracted by some very novel and exceedingly beautiful designs in jewellery exhibited in Harry Emmanuel's window. They consist of the heads, crests, and breasts of brilliant humming-birds set as brooches, pins, earrings, and necklaces. The beaks are of gold, the eyes are precious stones, but the plumage is the real plumage, than which nothing more lustrous, more opalescent and ever-varying, as the light strikes upon it, can possibly be conceived. No jewels can vie with some of the feathers in splendour, and, with a solid but simple setting of gold, some of the heads surpass, for elegance as well as piquancy, anything of the sort that I ever saw. "French, of course," said I to myself. But on inquiry I found they were not. The idea is English born, and does us credit as a nation. The notion has been patented, and therefore I imagine the prices asked for these ornaments are fancy prices; but I cannot imagine a prettier present or one more likely to delight the "bright particular she" who rules a man's fate than one of these natural gems. At any rate, those who can't buy can look, and a visit to Bond-street will, I think, be well repaid by the sight of these original and uncommon objects of bijouterie.

It would appear that the butchers have been soaking in the strongest pickle a rod for their own broad backs. The exorbitant, unreasonable price of meat has caused the incorporation of the National Cattle and Meat Company (Limited). According to the prospectus issued—which, I am bound to say, seems to have been most carefully considered—an examination of most reliable data shows that a company so formed can deliver meat to the consumer at 7½d. per lb. at present wholesale prices, and still leave a handsome profit to the shareholders. This is rare news, indeed, for all classes, from the duke in the square to the workman in the garret. Prime beef and mutton for 7½d. It will be better than three victories, or the arrival of ever so many tons of specie.

#### THE THEATRICAL LOUNGER.

Actresses, actors, scene-painters, costumers, and property-makers are now working their hardest at the forthcoming burlesques and pantomimes, and on the 26th inst. the public will see what it will see. It is unnecessary to prophesy that every pantomime produced will be the best, and every burlesque the most brilliant—that is, if there be truth in playbills. And it is a most satisfactory thing to hear this, as it gives a clear and positive contradiction to those stupid people who prate about the degeneration of theatrical entertainments and the decline of the drama.

On Saturday "The School for Scandal" was revived at the ST. JAMES'S. Miss Herbert was the Lady Teazle, Mr. Frank Matthews Sir Peter, Mrs. Frank Matthews Mrs. Candour, Mr. Walter Lacy the Charles, and Mr. Belton the Joseph, Surface.

Miss Teresa Furtado has reappeared at the ADELPHI, in the face of a "Pas de Fascination."

LOST TREASURES.—Seven years ago, according to Lloyd's register, a vessel was wrecked in a certain bay in Cornwall, on board of which, it is stated, were not less than 27,000,000 dollars. Making due allowance for exaggeration, there is, we believe, no doubt that a large amount of treasure was lost on this occasion, and the story is to some extent authenticated by the periodical appearance of some of the dollars washed ashore after severe storms. Such a prize in this age of speculation was pretty sure to be angled for, and accordingly it is proposed to form a company, bearing the name of "The Dollar Recovery Company," to fish for the hidden treasure.

THE FENIANS.—The first Fenian prisoner put upon his trial before the Special Commission at Cork was a Captain M'Afferty, who had served in the Confederate army, and who was a subject of the United States. He was, it seems, arrested while on board a steam-ship from America, and was brought ashore in custody. His counsel objected that he was an alien, who in his own country could not commit the offence with which he was charged, and who had not set foot on our land so as to become guilty when he was arrested. The Judges held that this objection was fatal to the indictment, and the jury, under their direction, returned a verdict of "Not guilty." True bills have been found against several prisoners, and the trials are proceeding.

#### NEW MUSIC.

*My head is like to rend.* Song. By ELIZABETH PHILP. *The Irish King's Ride.* Ballad. By ELIZABETH PHILP. Addison and Co. *Ninon.* Romance Française. Par ELIZABETH PHILP. *Sitting lonely, ever lonely.* Ballad. By ELIZABETH PHILP. Cramer, Beale, and Wood.

"My head is like to rend" is an appropriate and very melodious setting of the touching song by Motherwell, introduced into "Maxwell Drewitt."

The sad but spirited ballad of "The Irish King's Ride," from the same admirable novel, has been treated by Miss Philp in a really dramatic style.

"Ninon" is a graceful "romance," the music of which is worthy of Alfred de Musset's charming lines, "Ninon, Ninon, que fois tu de la vie," from "Le Spectacle dans un fauteuil."

"Sitting lonely, ever lonely," is an expressive ballad, of which the words are furnished by Miss Amelia B. Edwards, one of the few poets or poetesses of the present day who are able to write poetry which is really adapted for musical composition.

Signor Ardit's scherzo, "L'Orologio," sung with so much success by Miss Laura Harris, is published by Messrs. Boosey, with Italian and English words, as a pianoforte piece, and as a polka. Messrs. Boosey—to pass from gay to grave—have brought out some very cheap editions of church services, complete for morning and evening, and beautifully printed. "Ebdon in C," "King in F," "Jackson in E flat," and other well-known services, may now be purchased for sixpence each. Henry Smart's "Fifty Interludes for the Organ," in one volume, and "Wely's Offertories for the Organ" (the six books in one) have also been lately produced by this house in a portable form and at very moderate prices.

Messrs. Duncan Davison and Co. have issued a third edition of M. Ferrari's excellent work on "The Voice and Singing" ("Singing and the Voice," for the sake of rhythm, it ought to be called). The same publishers have also brought out a new edition of Mr. W. H. Holmes's "Major and Minor Scales for the Pianoforte." No opinion need be passed on "the scales"—which many writers would feel to be a relief. The value of Verdi's music, when Verdi's success as a European composer was still doubtful, used often to be questioned by high-art critics; and the deserts of Wagner are questioned even now by critics of all kinds, high and low. But everyone entertains the same opinion about the merits of the scales, considered as mechanical exercises, and about their merits in a melodic point of view. Mr. Holmes's work, besides the scales properly fingered, contains passages on the various modes of touch, "advice as to practising," and "short preludes in the form of chords arpeggiated in each key," to enable a pianist to play a prelude before a piece of music of whatever character.

#### LAW AND CRIME.

SIR ROBERT CLIFTON brought an action, tried on Saturday last at Guildhall, against the publisher of the *Patriot*, a London newspaper. The *Patriot* had commented, in a leading article, upon an election at Nottingham, at which Sir Robert was a successful candidate, and had therein described him as a "desperado and lawless rowdy," an "aristocratic miscreant," and a subject for "loathing." All this was done in the way of vituperation, and without the concomitant statement of certain facts which might otherwise have furnished some reasonable ground for the abuse. It was perhaps for this reason that the defendant was not advised to plead justification, and hence he lost his cause. Sir Robert himself admitted having used, at a public meeting, language certainly beyond all recognised limits of ordinary discussion or propriety, also that he had been charged with having instigated riots in which the houses of some of his opponents had been gutted, and that he might have said "that they deserved to be treated as they were being treated." But as to such matters further cross-examination of the plaintiff was precluded, and no evidence for the defence was allowed to be given in consequence of the want of a plea of justification. Under these circumstances the jury were compelled to give the plaintiff a verdict. They did so, with only £50 damages.

The notorious impostor, calling himself Doctor Sutton, and pretending to be a surgeon, has been convicted of fraudulent imitation of trade marks upon pianos, which he had attempted to palm off as Broadwood's, and has been sentenced to two months' hard labour.

#### TWO OLD CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS IN FRANCE.

DOES anyone now believe in fairies, or in the efficacy of spells and incantations, or in charms and all the white diablerie which were formerly associated with the holiday seasons of the year?

We have almost ceased to regard the holidays themselves; who now remembers Candlemas, or Hallow'e'en, or even Lady Day or Michaelmas, except by reason of the visit of the landlord and the tax-collector?

The mysteries of the bridecake are now seldom practised—nuts are no longer roasted in the embers; and we may confidently expect that plum-pudding will in another generation be as little cared for as snapdragon, and will share the fate—as far as regards its especial associations—of the roast goose and apple-porridge of Michaelmas or the beans and bacon of Ash Wednesday. It may be well that old ignorant superstitions should be abandoned in favour of the advancement of science, and that even a picturesque falsehood has about it the evil that must belong to everything that is "not of the truth;" but when we give our old lamps for new ones, would it not be wise to see what is the kind of light we are to have in exchange? If we must have a few full-flavoured superstitions to keep us from a too absolute realism, let them be of the good old sort, ripened by age and venerable by the mysterious uncertainty of half-forgotten tradition. We may not quite believe in them, but the very fact of their having for ages formed a part of the creed of hundreds of our countrymen is in favour of "there being something in them."

Well, we have exchanged all the old lamps of fairy folk, and love-trysts, and mystic spells—for what? For the fortune-telling of some fat, frowsy, old hag, who lives in a two-pair back in the next slum, and hankers after the spoons and umbrellas while she shows a pack of greasy cards at the area window.

In remote country districts there are still those who believe in the white witchcraft which includes an invocation of supernatural aid to enable the inquirer to pierce for a moment through the veil of futurity. That there are certain days—or, rather, certain nights—in the year on which this power is still granted to mortals who are bold enough to complete the spell is yet an article of the faith of some outlying rustic communities beyond railways and the influences of mechanics' institutions; but all the details of the ceremonies are becoming vague and dim; and while the distinction between fairy and gnome, and wizard and warlock, and all the mysterious dwellers on the threshold between the two worlds are no longer definite. There has been such a flood of light let in through the chinks of those doors which science has unlocked and is now opening that it has served to dissipate most of these unreal shadows and only a few still linger in such remote corners as we have indicated. In Hedingham a so-called wizard, a poor, wretched, lame, afflicted old Frenchman, whose wits had gone a woolgathering, was either half or wholly drowned and cudgelled to death some two years ago; and every now and then some atrocity or absurdity comes out to remind us that such shadows still linger in places not yet swept and garnished. But they have gone for the most part, and we must seek in other countries even for the remains of that belief in the unseen which took so fantastic and often so terrible a shape; and even there our quest must be prompt, for light travels fast, and the outlines of the shadow will fade quickly.

Should the summer tourist who spends a vacation in the south of France determine to travel out of the ordinary line of march and to linger amongst the country folk, he will be not a little surprised to find how the old dark, legendary superstitions have been preserved, along with some brighter and more genial customs which have been well worth remembrance. Very terrible are some of these wild myths and fancies, for they come of a Celtic race. Who that has

been amongst the Bearnais cannot see, even amidst the wild abandon of their dances and the picturesque jollity of some of their festive ceremonies, a deep melancholy substratum of character? Listen to the songs of the mountaineers of the Pyrenées as they traverse the streets in bands arm in arm, the mournful chants are sweet and touching enough, but there is little of mirth in them, and their cadences seem to be adapted to the vast mountain solitudes, whence the distant echoes bear back the burden of the song in a sad refrain.

Amongst the Bigorra, however, the superstitions of southern France are preserved with strange fidelity. They run chiefly in the direction of concealed treasures guarded by supernatural beings in the forms of animals; but the evil eye and the spell that maims and rots are amongst the darkest of their terrors—worse, from their perpetual presence, than even the dreaded wehr-wolf, against whom neither bullets nor stones are of avail, but who seeks to overcome the belated shepherd, that he may regain the human form, forfeited by his compact with the Evil One. Against the evil eye and the powers of a blighting witchcraft that can smite with disease or even remove the victim bodily to the middle of a forest, the relics of St. Orose, at Jacca, in Aragon, are there held to be the best remedy, and marvellous cures are recorded by the believers in this saint. Against these gloomy superstitions there may be placed some of a lighter and more genial character, such as the belief in fairies, which, like the brownies of Scotland, will do the work of the maids so long as they are furnished with white wheaten bread and honey. The games and sports, too, are many of them jovial enough; and the marriage ceremonies are even more elaborate than (though similar to) those described a week or two ago in these columns in relation to Normandy. Then there are meetings similar to the "quillings" and "husking frolics" of the Americans, where families of the farmers meet at each others' houses to strip the maize-cobs from their husks. These are amongst the jolliest occasions of all the year, ending with a supper and a return home of the party singing part-songs on their journey; but in the south of France, as in most other parts of Europe, Christmas Eve is kept as an important festival, and the custom by which the great Christmas-tide holiday is inaugurated is one of the most remarkable as well as the most picturesque ceremonies to be seen amongst these remarkable people. It was more universally practised in the seventeenth century, as it has been depicted in the drawing from which our Engraving is taken; but it still preserves its interest, and may doubtless be referred to some very ancient practice in connection with those strange superstitions of which this part of the world retains such a deep impression. In several districts this ceremony of illuminating, not only the villages, but also the fields and woods, on Christmas Eve is still common, the young men forming a procession, each person in which bears a long flaming torch of pinewood. The light from such a number of flambeaux moving along the country roads or across the hills, and the red glare which is thrown upon the trees as the procession halts in some dim space of the neighbouring forest, is so wonderfully picturesque that it well repays an excursion, even on a dark wintry night in December. In some villages they bind straw round a cart-wheel, and, after setting fire to it with a consecrated taper, roll the wheel over the fields, which they hope by this spell to fertilise.

On the night of Christmas Eve every "coign of vantage" is surmounted with great pine-branches, torches made of resinous materials, or faggots enveloped in straw; and from church tower, village well, townhall, market-place, and every building of importance, the ruddy glare shines upon every street; while the bonfires and beacons which are aflame in the fields and woods and on the surrounding hillsides light up the whole country for a festival which dates from the time of Constantine.

The still more ancient ceremony of the *Réveillon*, the midnight feast, belongs to the maritime population of the northern coast of France. Nobody who has travelled in these charming districts will have failed to notice the excellent appetites of the people. It is the Rev. Mr. Musgrave who records the particulars of a light luncheon served to a happy pair on board the steamer from Rouen to Havre. It consisted of soup, fried mackerel, two relays of beef-steak, ditto of French beans and fried potatoes, an omelette *aux fines herbes*, flanked immediately by a fricandeau of veal and sorrel. The dishes that had contained all these were supplanted by a roast chicken garnished with mushrooms, and commended to the gentle senses by a hock of ham served upon spinach.

This engrossed an interval of twenty-five minutes, the chicken having disappeared in ten, but the ham taking more time. Then came an open apricot tart, three custards, and an endive salad, which was the precursor of a leg of lamb sprinkled with chopped onion and ground nutmeg. All except the joint was consumed, with two bottles of petit borgogne and one of chablis, and then came coffee, a couple of glasses of absinthe and eau de Cologne, a Mignon cheese, and a dessert of pears, plums, grapes, and cakes.

It is not surprising, then, that with these jolly propensities the people of the coast, even those of the poorer class, should contrive to make merry on Christmas Eve; and, after attending midnight mass, the *Réveillon* begins, those who are too poor to provide the supply for themselves being invited to partake of the hospitality of their more fortunate neighbours. The beverages are beer or wine, and the eatables consist almost solely of pork-pies, and those marvellous combinations known in this country as "black puddings," which are prepared by being broiled on the gridiron. This particular dish was formerly introduced as the Christmas Eve supper by almost all classes of society; but the original reason for its adoption on this occasion is, perhaps, as difficult to determine as that of the connection of our own plum-pudding with Christmas Day.

TURNING THE TABLES.—A gentleman of Lewiston, U.S., says the other day a girl called at his door and asked if his family "wanted househelp." He replied they did. "Do you have small children?" she asked. "No." "Do you have your washing done out of the house?" "No." "Will my room be carpeted?" "Yes." After going on awhile in this manner, the gentleman turned the tide and said he would like to ask her a few questions. "Can you play the piano?" he began. "Oh! no." "Can you speak French?" "No." "Can you sing the opera?" "No." "Can you dance the 'Lancers'?" "No." "Well, then," he concluded, "if you can't do any of these you won't suit," and off went the astonished maiden, smelling mice!

GRAND EXCURSION FROM NEW YORK TO EUROPE.—A grand excursion from New York to Europe is in course of arrangement. A first-class steamer is to be chartered for the purpose, and the countries and places to be visited are England, Ireland, the Isle of Wight, Holland, France, Portugal, Spain, Gibraltar, Malta, Turkey, the Black Sea (including Sebastopol and Sinope), the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, ancient Troy, Syria, the Holy Land (giving ten days to Jerusalem, &c.), Egypt, Candia, Cyprus, Greece, Corfu, Venice, Ancona, Rome, Florence, Naples, and Genoa or Sicily, Corsica, Capri, where Garibaldi lives), Sardinia, parts of Africa, Madeira, the Canary Islands, and Cuba. Each place will be visited at the most favourable season, and the voyage is to commence on the 12th of May, starting from and returning to New York. A physician will be on board, a good table will be kept, and a first-class French cook will manage the cuisine. Only one hundred passengers will be admitted, and the price of the whole ten months' trip, which by the usual conveyances would cover two years and cost 7000 dollars, in gold to any traveller, will be 2500 dollars, of which one fifth is to be paid down on engaging a place among the tourists.

INTERESTING ANTIQUARIAN RELIC.—A few days ago, as some men in the employment of Mr. Holt, railway contractor, were excavating in the Castle Bailey at Clare, in Suffolk, near to the entrance of the railway station, they turned up one of the most interesting relics yet found in this vicinity. It is a gold cross, attached to about 2 ft. of ornamental gold chain. The cross is about 1½ in. long, with a large pearl at each intersection of the upright and transverse pieces. On the upper side of the cross is a representation of the Saviour, as crucified, with the glory and the crown of thorns about his head. On the scroll over him are the letters I.N.R.I., for "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." The same letters, apparently in Lombardic characters, occur once on each limb of the cross. When a small pin is removed a portion of the upper side of the cross may be taken off; in the cavity is a small piece of wood and a minute fragment of granite. The wood is supposed, with some probability, to be a fragment of the "true cross," and the pebble a memorial from some sacred locality in the Holy Land. In the year 1378 Philippa, Countess of March, bequeathed to Edmund, her son, a piece of the true cross, which she charges him, on her blessing, to keep. This Edmund, Lord of Clare, also bequeathed to Wymore Aubrey "a cross of gold set with stones, with a relique of the true cross." In many ancient wills similar bequests are met with. The cross and chain thus found at Clare are in an excellent state of preservation.



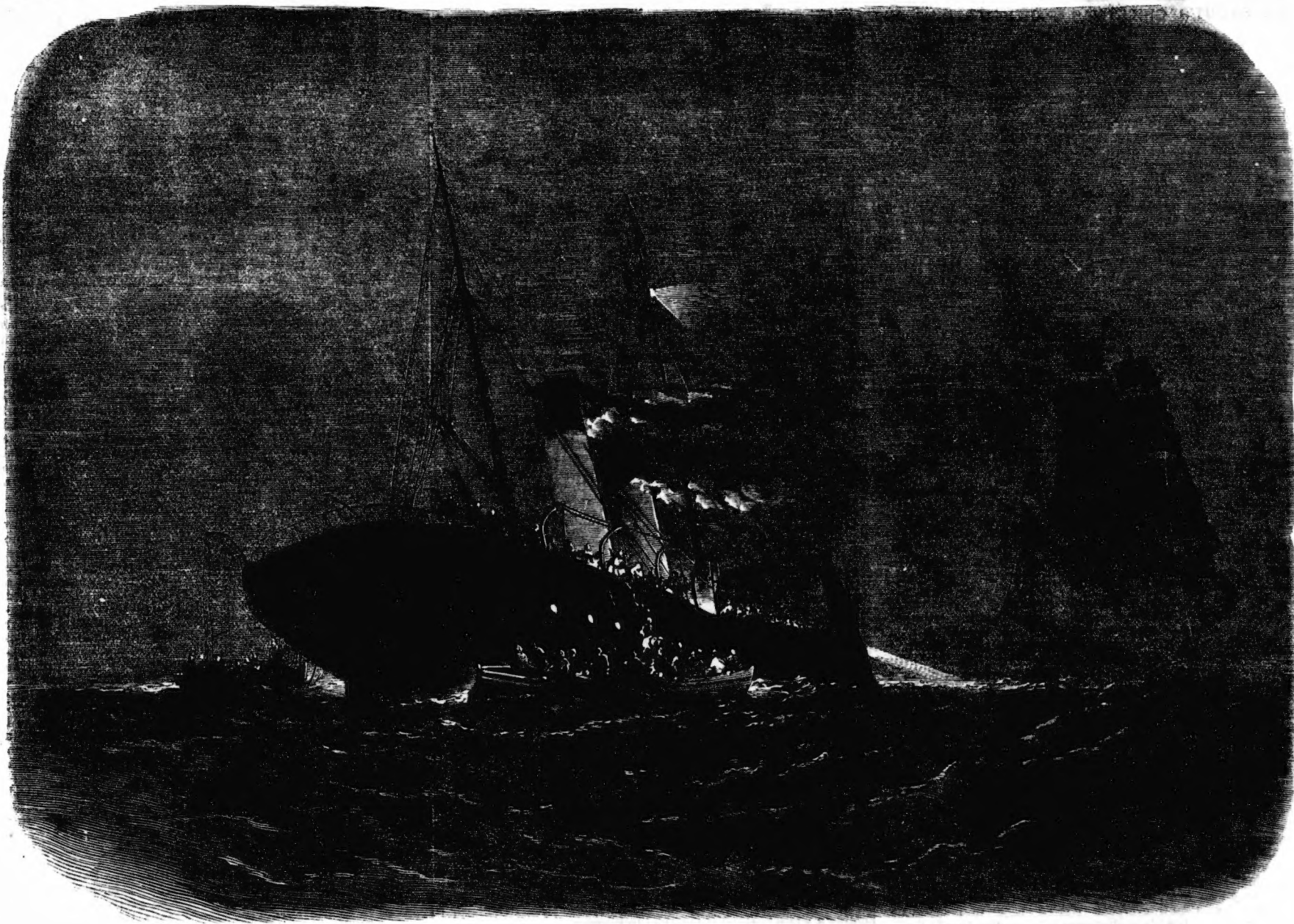


MUSICAL CHAIRS: A CHRISTMAS PASTIME.—(DRAWN BY ADELAIDE CLAXTON.)—SEE PAGE 387.

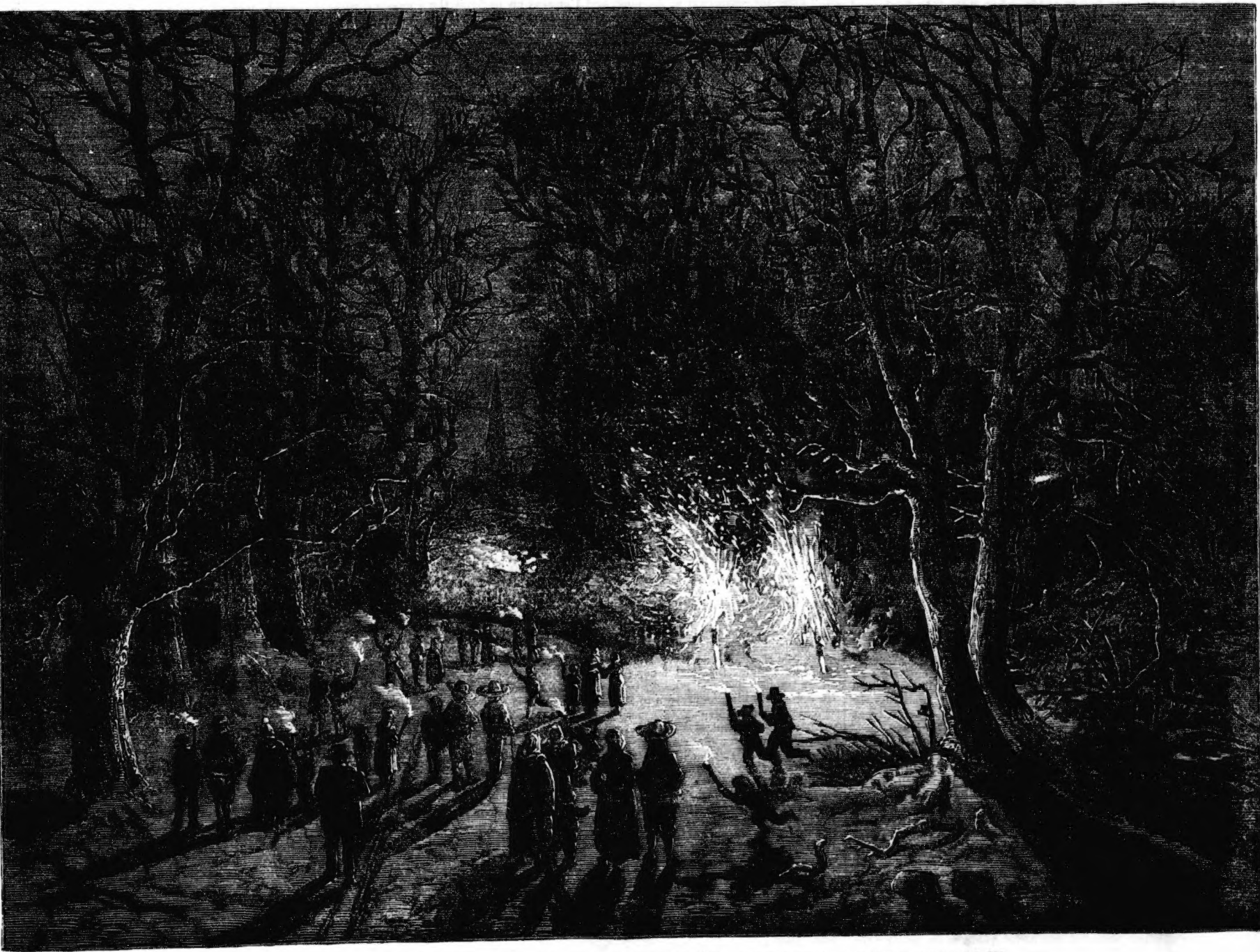


ENGLISH SAILORS BUYING A CHRISTMAS DINNER AT TANGIER.—SEE PAGE 387.





COLLISION IN THE CHANNEL BETWEEN THE MAIL-STEAMER SAMPHIRE AND THE AMERICAN BARQUE FANNY BUCK.—SEE PAGE 387.



CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE IN THE 17TH CENTURY.—(DRAWN BY H. D. GRISSET.)—SEE PAGE 391.



## JACK PROUT'S CHRISTMAS PARTY—ITS RISE AND PROGRESS, DECLINE AND FALL.

SHOWING THAT IT IS ALWAYS WISE TO MAKE THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

LET us hope that it will not be wrong to confess, in the broad face of day and in good clear type, to an acquaintance with Jack Prout. It is certainly not considered exactly proper for a writer just at the present day, and perhaps for a month or so till the mode changes, to own to any acquaintance under the degree of a barrister, or the somewhat indefinite rank of a "swell." Now, Jack Prout is simply a clerk in a Government office, and, as he works hard, of course his salary is small in proportion. However, his labours were lightened a little, and his pay accordingly increased, just before the time of the incidents about to be related; and Jack has strong hopes, if he should only live to the age of a hundred and fifty or so, of being placed at the head of his department, with the income of a millionaire and the necessity of doing nothing.

On the actual "rise" just before mentioned Jack thought it high time to begin to settle in life. Perhaps other than merely prudential considerations impelled him to make what his respected parents believed to be a somewhat premature struggle for a home of his own. Nobody who ever saw Mrs. John Prout could long wonder why her husband had not cared to protract his courtship.

That had been at an end, and the young couple established in their home for about two months, when Jack sent out his invitations for a party. Jack's circle of acquaintance was not extensive, and his house was not of extraordinary dimensions, although certainly large enough for his own requirements. It was situated in what is commonly known as a "builder's neighbourhood." You approached it over roads supported by arched structures, the coal-cellars of the future, in the centre of each of which was a large circular hole just big enough to let a man fall through comfortably up to his waist should the piece of flagstone used for covering the orifice chance to have been removed by accident or mischievous design. On each side of the road, and far below its level, were those horrible burlesques upon meadows which London boys accept as "fields," overgrown with thistle, burdock, and long, knotty, unwholesome-looking grass, and variegated with dead cats and heaps of broken brick. Here and there along the road might be seen a group of ghastly "carcasses" of houses, with their unglazed windows and naked rafters, reminding one of the eyeholes and ribs of a skeleton, and calling up to the imagination how some speculative builder, having purchased the ground under a mortgage, had obtained his bricks and timber upon credit, paid his men with cash from discounted bills, gone into debt for every necessary and comfort on the strength of the works, and, finally, taken the "benefit of the Act," when the game could be played no longer. Next to these came a wilderness of new streets, places, and terraces, so ingeniously contrived and so bewilderingly alike in architecture and general aspect that no resident in the neighbourhood could ever direct a stranger, or even find his way by night to his own door, from the next street but one. Beyond this maze, only to be permeated by observing astronomical appearances or by taking the direction of the wind and firmly resisting the blandishments of the crescent, which promised an obvious short cut, but always fulfilled its great mission of bringing travellers to a spot ten yards distant from that whence they started half an hour before—existed a combination, or kind of hybrid, between the desolate ground to be let unfurnished and the populous new district. And here, in a three-story house with stucco front, was the residence of Jack Prout; and here, one January evening, when the half-bricks, the wretched stalks of the weeds, the dead cats, and the desolate unglazed speculations, were all alike covered with a white and glistening rime-frost, assembled Jack's first Christmas Party.

You may guess how everyone started back in amazement when, after performing his preliminary solo on the knocker, the door was opened by a real boy in buttons. And here may be remarked a very curious psychological fact. That boy cried aloud to each visitor, from every button of his jacket, "Don't be frightened. Jack is not 'going it.' I'm not his Buttons: I am merely the creature of the occasion. The party over, I shall never again be beheld by human eye. But, as you value Jack's friendship, and by all the sacred ties of hospitality, I conjure you not to harbour a doubt as to my permanent existence. Ask not a question—breathe not a syllable; but accept me in faith and in silence." And all this he said distinctly to our minds, though his lips only uttered the words, "Gents' coats an' 'ate in the study at hend of the passidge!"

The reason of this arrangement, which may seem unintelligible to people who give parties of which the *Morning Post* publishes a list of the names of the guests, was, that Jack's male friends, instead of coming properly in broughams and family coaches, and attired ready to glide at once into any ball-room without further preparation, had, in almost every instance, wrapped themselves up in greatcoats and shawls, put their dress boots and white kids (the latter wrapped in blue paper) into their pockets, and, except when accompanied by ladies, in which case they took cabs, had "tramped it up" to his house. And so far was this from being thought in any way wrong or degrading that they did not scruple to avow the fact. As nearly everyone had arrived at the spot by a different route, the first question among the visitors, after the usual salutation, was, "which way did you come?" Mr. Pimmins, the only brother of four sisters, and who was consequently of that peculiar temperament which, *teste* Homer, such a family arrangement produces, was taken aback by this question, as he was, indeed, usually by every other. At last he answered, with some misapprehension, "Oh, we came in a Clarence." Whereat Tom Prittle, who, being a stout man of forty, was a kind of privileged joker, rejoined, "Then I was twice as aristocratic as you, for I came in a pair of 'em!" Meaning a particular kind of boot known by that denomination.

When the outer wrappers had been removed (those of the visitors who had white waistcoats, by-the-way, had tied clean silk handkerchiefs bib-fashion round their necks to preserve the purity of their vests)—when the Clarences had been exchanged for Alberts, the kid gloves drawn from the blue papers, and the hair arranged by each man (generally with a pocket-comb, brought by himself for the purpose), all proceeded into the front parlour, which was somewhat inconveniently full. Those who had brought ladies waited at the foot of the stairs while the dear creatures, fluttering with ribbons and book-muslin, came down from their tiring-room on the second floor. What large eyes, what white arms, what red lips, what full skirts!

In the parlour at the head of a tea-table sat Mrs. Prout, looking, it must be confessed, somewhat unpleasantly warm, as the prettiest little lady in the world well might if placed in a small parlour, with a large fire, plenty of candles, a crowd of visitors, and a hissing tea-urn right opposite, and engaged in the occupation of pouring out a boiling fluid for one hour and a half continuously. Here Mr. Pimmins caused a laugh by addressing her as "Miss Summers," which it appeared had been her maiden name. On being recalled to a sense of his error, he blushed and fidgeted, until, with a desperate attempt to appear at his ease, he put one hand vaguely into his pocket and drew out his pocket-comb, the sight of which at such a moment so terrified him that he rushed from the room.

Away then! Up the narrow staircase, which Jack had illuminated elaborately with three Turkish lanterns (one globular and two oblong), and upon the landing-place of which—just in front of the long tall French window, opening on to the flat leaden roof of the cloak-room, and disclosing in the daytime a hideous perspective of back yards, varied only by dustbins and under apparel in a moist state hanging out to dry—Jack had placed no less than six geraniums in pots, making the affair look quite like a conservatory, in fact. Away up to the first floor, upon opening the front-room door of which, a sight to make a nervous spectator shudder met the eye. Mr. Pimmins, being a nervous person, drew back, preferring to remain a while watching the arrival of the guests. Here he beheld the ascension of Bob Crofts, who, as a single man in the most extended sense, not having even a flirtation on hand, rushed up three stairs at a time, humming a comic song, but who, nevertheless, subsided into awful quietude on opening the door of that fatal chamber. Up came old Tom Summers, the father-in-law of the host, coughing as he mounted, and puffing a long and

not inaudible gust of dismay as he, too, entered. Up came Mr. and Mrs. Joe Brissenden; Mrs. Joe rather stout, and driving Mr. Joe to seek refuge between the bars of the banisters as they both worked their way, side by side as far as practicable, along the narrow staircase. Mrs. Joe took the entire space, and Joe himself had to clutch at the balustrade to save himself from slipping between the rails. Then came a mass of book-muslin, surmounted by youthful faces, and covering lightsome hearts, seeking expression orally no less than physiognomically. Mr. Pimmins knew one or two of the owners of those bright eyes, and, collecting his courage, rushed into the dreaded apartment, covering himself as he best could behind Mrs. Joe Brissenden's broad shoulders. On entering the room Mr. Pimmins deeply regretted the step he had taken, and which he now found it impossible to retrace. The chamber was intended to bear the appearance of having been "cleared for a dance," an aspect which it certainly presented to some extent, inasmuch as the rout seats, which Jack Prout had borrowed at the rate of threepence per foot from an adjacent furniture-dealer, were the only articles which had ever been brought within its precincts. On these seats, ranged against the walls, sat the guests, the ladies on one side and the gentlemen on the other. The ladies were very quiet. Those who had fans occupied themselves in counting the ribs with great deliberation; others appeared absorbed in delicate botanical investigation of the pistils of the flowers in their bouquets. Occasionally one would rise in silence, and with a solemn, circular sweep of the book-muslin, change her seat, in order to be near some acquaintance, when the usual salutations were exchanged in a whisper.

The gentlemen sat, for the most part, with their hands on their knees, and contemplated their boots. One, who had dangled at his watch-guard a bundle of ridiculous gimcracks called charms, amused himself gravely by twiddling them round his fingers and back again, observing particularly the effect of the motion upon an absurd gilt thing intended to represent a pickaxe. Mr. Pimmins dashed into a seat at random, and found himself, when he ventured to look up, between two lively companions. One was evidently a commercial man, for he wore whiskers carefully trained into the exact size and shape of a mutton chop, had a frill to his shirt, and a bald head. His eyes, of a light, greyish blue, were set in a round white mass, and flashed with a brilliancy which at once raised involuntary reminiscences in Mr. Pimmins's mind of having dined, last Good Friday, off boiled salted codfish. But, as credit must be given where credit is due, we may mention that the bald gentleman behaved with the utmost good breeding, sitting with an immobility that would have done honour to a sphinx. On the other side of our bashful friend sat a young gentleman, of sentimental appearance, with dark hair and moustaches, large dark eyes with long lashes, and no particular forehead or chin worth mentioning. He was evidently a musical person, and passed the time by playing with his fingers on his legs, as though they formed, in combination, some orchestral instrument.

As the room gradually filled the rout seats became entirely occupied. Intimation of this important fact had apparently been carried down to Jack Prout, who had hitherto been occupied in receiving his guests; for that amiable young gentleman soon entered, carrying in two chairs, and for some time afterwards fully employed himself in rushing about the house, taking every available seat from every other apartment. Some obliging friends volunteered their assistance, which Jack accepted, and this little business afforded them some relief from their misery. But Jack's stock of chairs was soon exhausted, and he again descended to the door in despair.

Up came Mr. Tom Prittle, who cast his eyes around and understood the whole thing at a glance. Hastening outside the room, he buttoned his black coat over his white waistcoat, and re-entered, holding a white pocket-handkerchief to his eyes.

"So young, too!" he cried, with a smothered sob.

Everybody gazed in bewilderment.

"The—the—hearse is at the door, and I'm sent up to fetch the mutes," he continued, winding up with a loud "Boo-hoo!" at which some of the company laughed.

"Don't all come at once!" he continued, and then, dropping his handkerchief and throwing open his coat, he changed his manner. "Now, ladies and gentlemen, anything more in my humble way? Entertainments provided for evening parties on reasonable terms and shortest possible notice. Ventriloquism, fireworks, cricket, fantoccini, and equestrian scenes in the circle. Anything in the world except standing on my head, because then the money rolls out of my pockets, whereas my constant endeavours have been to make it tend the other way!"

There was another laugh—perhaps a little louder than the first; but some of the company began to look as if somewhat alarmed. Poor Mr. Pimmins turned quite red in the face, and gazed upon the floor with some display of nervous agitation, as if personally compromised by this highly irrational and ungenteel proceeding.

Tom Prittle placed one hand upon his heart, and made a most solemn bow, and then, after one or two oratorical flourishes of his handkerchief, to indicate that he was about to commence a speech, he began—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—Accustomed as I am to public speaking, I have been deputed by our kind host to interrupt for a few moments the uproarious festivity of this meeting by an announcement which will, I feel confident, afford to all present the greatest possible—shall I say delight? no, that word would be too weak, therefore I will, if you please, say—disappointment. Our kind host, with that foresight which distinguishes all his arrangements, has ordered for your amusement this evening a most capital quadrille band."

Here there was an unmistakable movement of pleasure among the auditors, and the musical gentleman gave vent to his gratification in a long-drawn "He-haw! he-haw!"

"And when I tell you, ladies and gentlemen," continued the speaker, with a stern manner, and in most impressive tones, "that that band contains not only a violin, but a harp; not merely a triangle, but also a cornet; not simply a drum, but an intelligent and highly accomplished juvenile to—to—in short—to whack it; when I tell you this and more—that that band is now momentarily expected (*signs of joy*), you will all, I am sure, be enraptured to hear that that band has also been momentarily expected any time these three hours; that that band has, in all probability, lost its way, and that ways lost about here are seldom found; and that I go to seek that band—nay, follow me not," he exclaimed, as several men started forward, as if to assist in the search, "follow me not. This is my adventure, and to me alone belongs the peril. I am but a lone man; others have mothers, sisters, friends—nay, perhaps more than all—loved ones." Here he wiped his eyes and wrung his pocket-handkerchief. "Let such remain to cheer and gladden the hearts of the fair. I go—farewell—farewell; and if I fall, pity me." With these words he left the room, and, like a plain, practical man, as jolly fellows usually are, went off in the first instance straight to the turnpike to make inquiries. Here we leave him, and return to the party.

When it became evident that the company were left to their own resources (Jack and Mrs. Prout appeared only at intervals, being continually called away on mysterious duties connected with the supper) everybody seemed inclined to thaw a little; but the inclination produced no very material results. Miss Pritchard, an elderly lady of prim demeanour, who evidently kept a girls' school, mildly proposed "games." On this somebody got a plate, and people gave themselves the names of flowers. Then somebody spun the plate, and called a flower, who had to run forward before the plate stopped. But there did not appear much exhilaration to be gained from this exercise, and the company evidently only kept it up on the shallow pretext of doing something.

It was while this pastime was yet proceeding that the host and hostess entered the room, having apparently succeeded in arranging the kitchen matters to the satisfaction of both. Jack Prout could invent no better contrivance than the miserable hypocrisy of pretending to believe that the company were enjoying themselves with Miss Pritchard's mild amusement. He inquired the rules of the game with great interest, and even went so far towards a thorough inquiry into its principles as to bestow a most minute investigation

on the plate—which, perhaps, did not teach him much. Mrs. Prout effected a slight diversion by disappearing: a preliminary to the appearance of the youth in buttons, with a tray containing oranges cut into quarters, and hot lemonade in wine-glasses, doubtless very agreeable Christmas entertainment for persons warm with dancing, but scarcely appreciated by the company, except in so far as it put a stop to that dreadful game of Miss Pritchard, which might otherwise have resulted in maniacal demonstrations on the part of the players. As it happened, they only returned to their old places against the wall. A young lady ventured to wonder whether one could see anything of the musicians yet, and the relief afforded by the observation was highly and immediately prized. Thirteen fair faces forthwith flattened their noses against Jack's front windows, and twenty-six eager eyes at once peered across the field of the feline cemetery, and gazed upon the lighted windows of the "Builders' Arms," a quarter of a mile off, but still the nearest house opposite. These were all that those eyes beheld through the blackness of the night. A minute afterwards a young lady, aged nine, of impressive temperament, began to cry, and was taken off into the ladies' dressing-room.

The musical man of the deficient chin and forehead was applied to, as a last resource, for a song. He declined, timidly alleging his utter inability to sing without accompaniment. After having been much pressed, however, he complied, probably more from utter feebleness of character and a yielding disposition, disliking pressure, than from any idea of contributing to the general entertainment. But he failed so dismally, chasing the melody through so many keys (for lack of the sustaining chords, which he missed sadly) and presented such a pitiable spectacle of accumulating imbecility and bewilderment, that when he broke down altogether everybody gave a great gasp of relief. Silence again impended over that awful party, when a tremendous rat-tat-tat-bang at the street door made every one jump, and so terrified Miss Pritchard as to cause a demand for smelling-bottles.

It was Mr. Tom Prittle. His expedition had been hitherto unsuccessful, and he had only cast a hasty glance around to see how matters had progressed in his absence. Hereupon he was seen to confer a moment with Jack, who hurried immediately down stairs. Meanwhile, Tom began cheerily to relate his adventures. How he had learnt at the turnpike that the party of musicians, four in a cab, had certainly passed through the gate two hours since and had not returned, and how he had engaged the tollkeeper's boy, by payment of a shilling and promise of half a crown, to wait at the bar until the band, who had evidently lost their way, should attempt to pass through on their return, in which event the boy (who happened to be a native) was to guide them to Mr. Prout's. How he had also instructed the police and the landlord at the Builders' Arms to similar purpose, and how the music, certainly brightened somewhere in the neighbourhood, as nothing less than a mountain mule-cart could enter the vicinity over the brick-fIELDS which surrounded every avenue but the turnpike-road, must inevitably arrive in a short space of time. "Meanwhile," added Mr. Prittle, "we cannot amuse ourselves better than by going down stairs to supper, which awaits us below."

As the supper consisted entirely of cold viands, and had been laid ever since the "tea" had been cleared away, the bringing down the guests an hour earlier than Jack Prout had intended did not matter much. Mr. Prittle rattled away with cheerful talk during the whole of the meal, being very particular to take wine with everybody who appeared to be reflecting upon the recent misery of that fearful room up stairs. As soon as supper had concluded he rose to his feet and delivered himself of another speech in proposing the healths of the host and hostess. In this he gently hinted that it appeared to him to be a somewhat strange thing if a party of clever, well-educated, and accomplished ladies and gentlemen, perhaps some of them highly talented, such as he saw then before him, should not be able to amuse and keep themselves in good-humour, without the aid—"of all persons in the world, ladies and gentlemen—of a band of musicians, of a set of four or five persons of limited acquisitions and decidedly inferior in intellect, beauty, and social position to those by whom I have the honour and happiness of being surrounded;—men with whose sentiments few of us have much sympathy, and whom none of us would care to meet as companions, or, in fact, to recognise in any other capacity than that of hired musicians in private life!"

These observations, being to some extent novel and true, elicited as much applause as could well be permitted in genteel society. When the ladies retired, the gentlemen remained but a few minutes, and engaged themselves exclusively in planning methods of entertainment. It was unanimously agreed that every man was to exhibit his powers of social amusement in the best possible way, and some arrangement was entered upon as to the manner in which the scheme was to be carried out.

When they rejoined the ladies, Mr. Prittle was solicited to favour the company with a song. He did so at once, with a jolly, social, comic song—not of the low, buffoon order, which appears to be the only class of comic song known in modern times, but a real, hearty piece of English humour, which made everyone laugh and forget the absence of the musicians, the distance from home, the difficulty of getting away, and the black, dreary night outside. Then he turned to Bob Crofts and asked him to relate the account of a public meeting which Bob had attended some short time before, and of which Mr. Prittle had evidently heard. Now, Bob, besides a most retentive memory, possessed the qualification of an excellent mimic. He told, not in the set phrase of the "comic entertainer," but in easy, conversational prose, of a "Great meeting upon a serious subject;" of the baldness and benevolence of the chairman; the shrewd readiness of the secretary, with bluebooks and statistics at his fingers' ends; the hard, hammer-like logic of the speaker from Glasgow; the affectation and folly of an aristocratic fellow who dropped into the meeting (it was, by-the-by, on popular education), and who opposed the movement altogether, on the ground that over-education was pernicious, that housemaids now were better educated than many noble Lords of antiquity, and that by teaching a thief, you made him simply a better-educated thief than before. Then, of the parochial authority, who insisted upon the application of the "voluntary principle," and whose discourse was interrupted by a continual sneeze, and by the entrance-door behind being constantly flung open for ingress or egress, each time causing the unfortunate orator to make a dive forward, and to break off into a piteous exclamation of "I wish to goodness you'd keep that door shut!" All this, being told in a natural, easy way, with a heightening of humour and imitation, caused some fun. It is wonderful to remark how much truth has to do with matters of humour. Bob Crofts's description was, as he said, true—every word of it. And it pleased, as Dutch pictures please, by fidelity more than by subject. The only dissentient was the man with the mutton-chop whiskers, who declared "there was nothing in it; he recollected the meeting very well, and it was word for word as Mr. Crofts had said."

Mr. Pimmins did not shine when called upon. He could only sing one song, and that was entitled "Farewell to the Mountain." Why Mr. Pimmins wished to bid farewell to the mountain, what mountain it was, how it was to fare well or otherwise, and why on earth, when, or how he ever came to learn that identical song were questions which occurred during the exertation to the minds of his hearers. But it is an odd circumstance, exemplifying, nevertheless, a stern general rule of society, that every English person, lady or gentleman, sings the identical song most in opposition to his or her own tastes, feelings, and habits. Young ladies of the highest respectability, and with the simplest notions of domestic comfort, long to rove the wild woods free; to be merry, merry zingaras, cantineers, vivandieres, butterflies, daisies, and every kind of absurdly misrepresented existence. Gentlemen of high personal integrity, but afflicted with bass voices, always affect to believe their malady a qualification for robbery, plunder, slaughter, and piracy upon the high seas. You seldom by any chance hear an Englishman sing a song he would not be ashamed to repeat, if written in prose, and as a candid exposition of his own feelings. Herein lies the difference between English and Scotch singers. A Scotch song means something, which nobody has so well expressed







# OPERA AND CONCERTS.

FELICIEN DAVID'S "Lalla Rookh" is, we believe, the next new opera we are to hear at Covent Garden. For some weeks, however, we shall have to go without music at the Royal English Opera, or nearly so. The pantomime will be preceded by Mr. Deffell's "Christmas Eve," which, according to the *Times*, "will doubtless put the audience in a proper train of mind for what is to follow." But, during the first run of "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp," it is not likely that any opera calculated to serve a more important purpose will be brought out.

This is apparently going to be a Felicien David winter. After hearing nothing of Felicien David's in London for something like fifteen or twenty years, we are suddenly presented with his celebrated "Ode Symphonique" in December, and are promised the most popular of his operas in January. "The Desert," which was the last novelty performed at Signor Arca's concerts, did not produce so favourable an impression as had been anticipated by those who had heard the work in 1847 or 1849 (we forget the precise year), when it was brought out by Mr. Lumley. It must be remembered, however, that "The Desert," when it was first given in England, was played in its proper and complete form; and that the principal parts were assigned to the very best singers in Mr.

Lumley's company. The composer's romantic life, moreover; his connection with the St. Simonians, his adventures in the East, his alleged discovery of a new style of music of purely Oriental type,

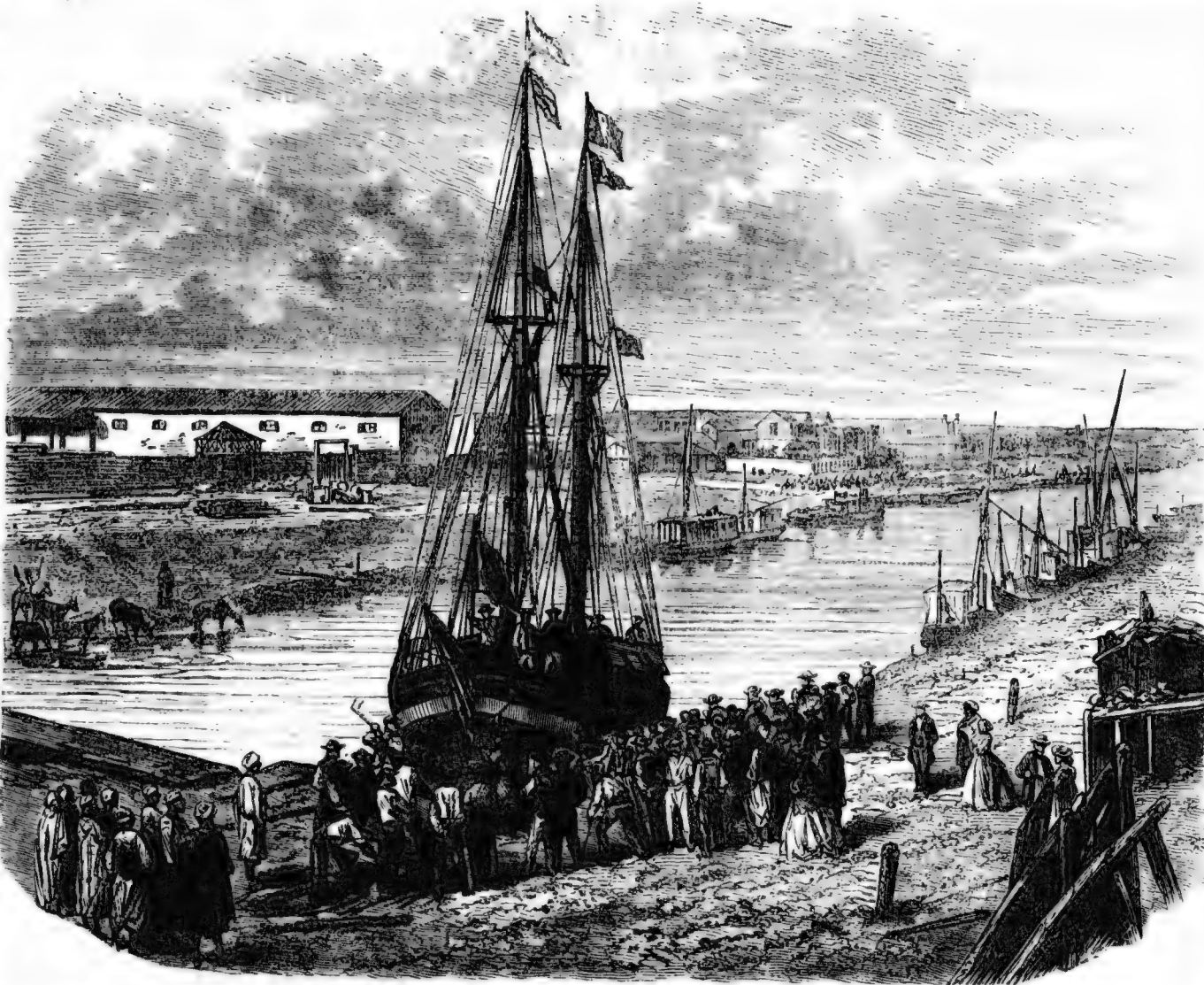
most activity. The barges which had carried 300 tons of oil and a freight of wood from Said to Suez have returned with a cargo from the shores of the Red Sea, and the merchandise has probably by

all combined to give a particular interest to his first work—for, with the exception of some hymns written for the socialistic community of Montmartre, we believe the "Desert" was Felicien David's earliest production.

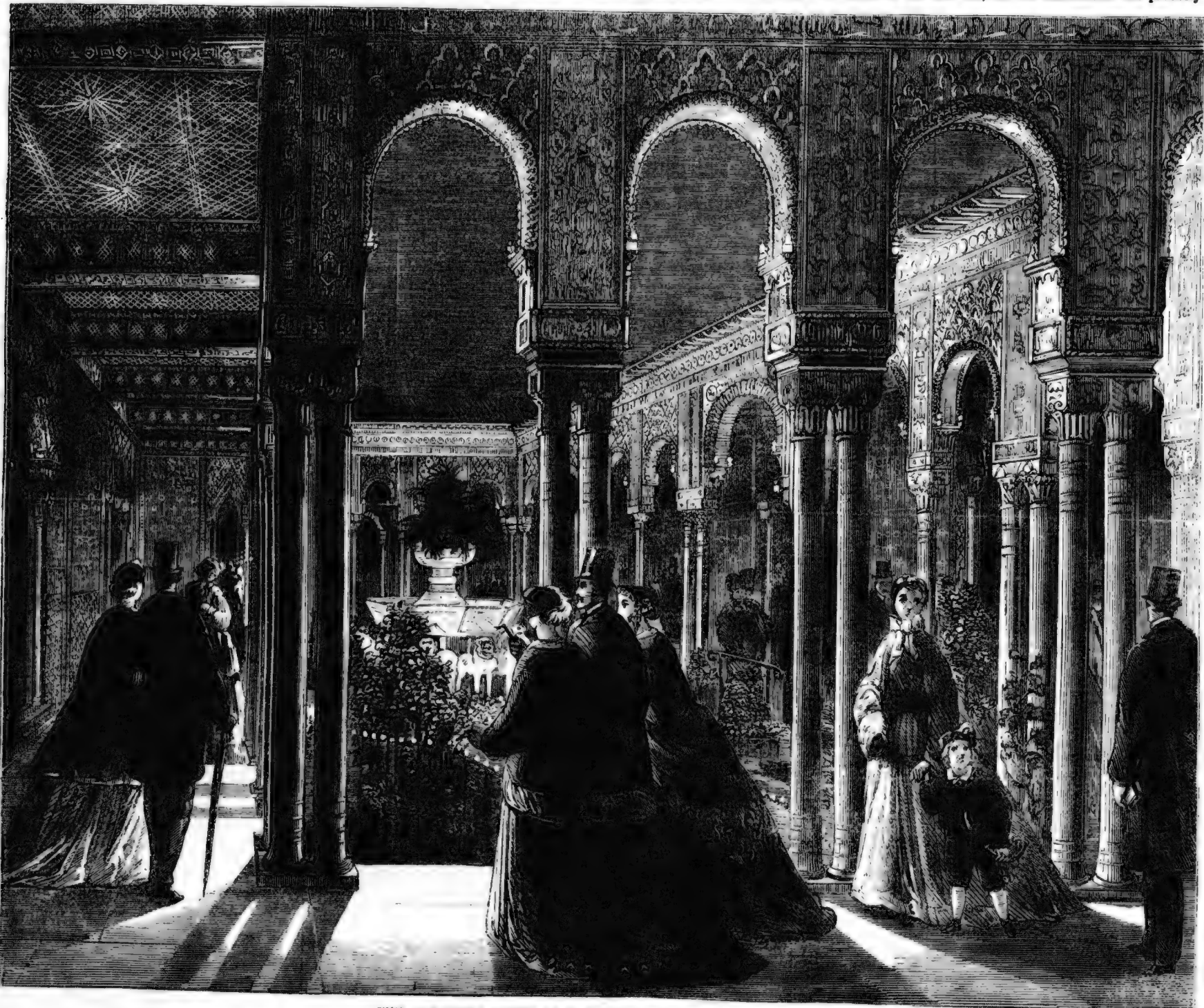
The third concert by pupils of the Royal Academy of Music took place on Saturday last. A new "Masque" by Mr. Fox, and several part-songs by Messrs. Doane and Jackson, were performed for the first time. Several vocalists and instrumentalists made what we may call their first formal appearance in private. Miss Horton, a soprano; Miss Bawermeister, a mezzo-soprano or contralto; and Mr. Hamilton, a bass, were the most successful among the singers. We are glad to hear that the Academy is about to be pulled down, and that future concerts will be held in a more suitable place than the old building in Tenterden-street.

## LAUNCH AT THE DOCKYARD ISMAILIA.

Our Engraving, which is taken from a photograph, represents the present condition of that part of Ismailia which lies on the banks of the Suez Canal, the works of which are proceeding with the utmost



LAUNCH OF THE GALLIOT EUGENIE AT THE DOCKYARD, ISMAILIA.



THE ALHAMBRA COURT AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE, ILLUMINATED.



this time been sold at Marseilles; so that the route may be said to have been completely opened.

In order to meet the demands of commerce, M. de Lesseps has augmented the means of transport; and one of the three schooners constructed by the company for this purpose was launched on the occasion when the photograph was taken from which our illustration is engraved.

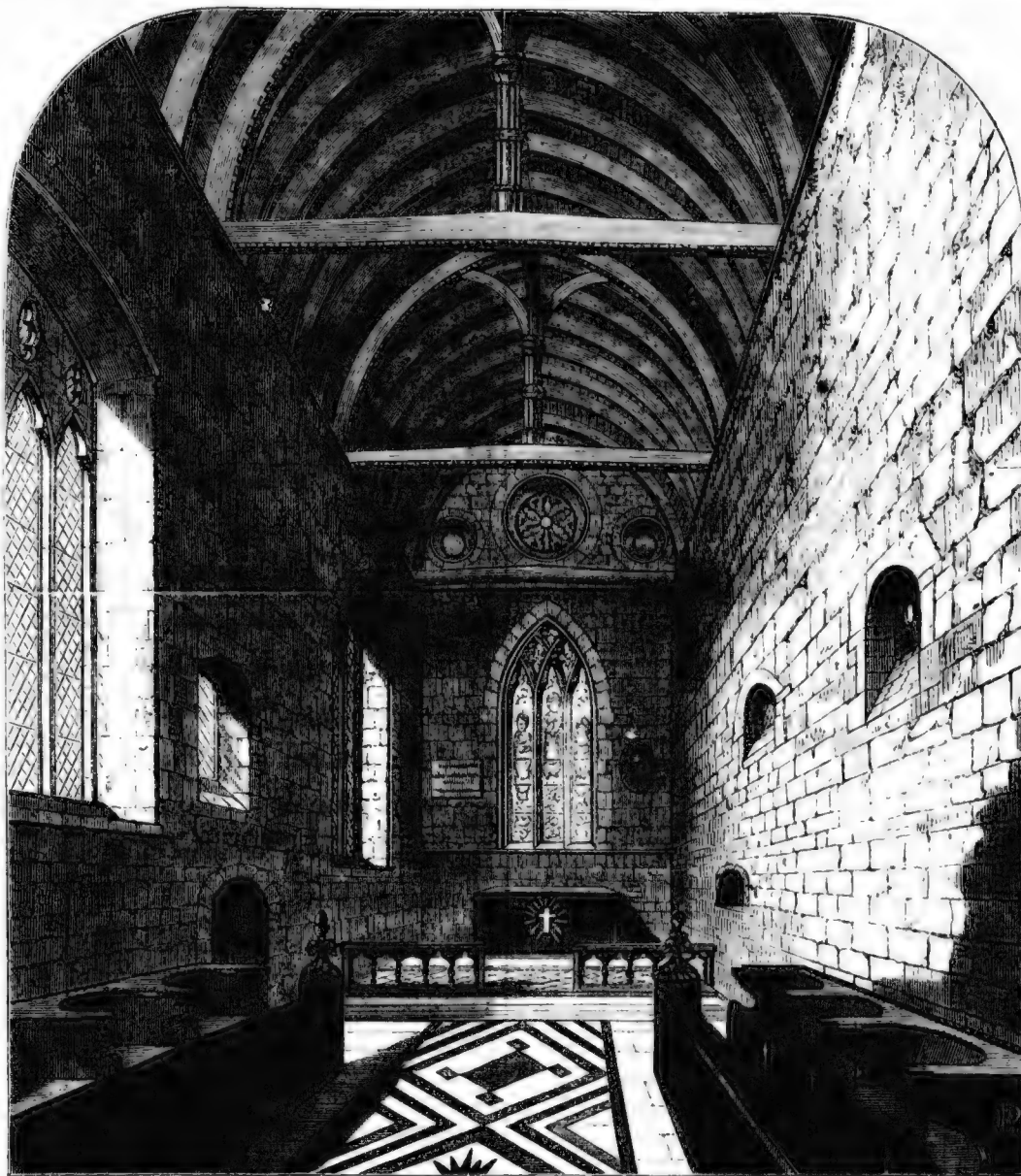
#### THE CRYSTAL PALACE ILLUMINATED.

THE idea of lighting up the Crystal Palace in the evening was an exceedingly happy one, as it not only extends the period during which the many attractions of this favourite place of resort may be enjoyed, but adds a new and striking feature to its almost illimitable sources of amusement and instruction. Even as seen from the outside, the immense expanse of glistening surface has a very fine effect; but when one enters the place, and looks along the nave, the impression produced by the light shining above and reflected on the artificial water below is grand in the extreme. The finest part of the whole, however, is the Alhambra Court, which is now illuminated each evening after dark. Everyone who has visited the Crystal Palace must have admired the wonderfully fine effect produced by that magnificent arrangement of rich colouring which distinguishes this reproduction of the luxurious abode of the Moorish conquerors of Spain; but, grand as is the effect by day, it is intensified a thousand-fold by the addition of lights at night. Indeed, we have never seen a more gorgeous sight. The best even of the fairy scenes of Beverley, Telbin, or Grieve are tame in comparison. Each bit of the infinitely varied colouring of the pillars, walls, and roof reflects, in wavering, quivering, scintillating hues the light thrown upon it; while the floor has the appearance of being a fairy garden, through which meanders a stream studded with floating lights. It is impossible to portray in an engraving, and much more so to describe, such a scene. It must be seen to be understood and appreciated, or even conceived. Our illustration, however, gives as near a delineation of it as is practicable without the aid of colours; and even with the help of all the appliances of the printer's art, it would be vain to hope even to faintly shadow forth a tithe of the infinite variety of beauty to be seen in the Alhambra Court.

The Christmas arrangements will this year be even on a more than ordinarily grand scale. They have been again placed under the sole direction of Mr. Nelson Lee, who has secured the best available talent in London. The great feature this season is a new pantomime, entitled "Rose, Shamrock, and Thistle," introducing sixty performers—Clown by the celebrated J. H. Stead; Pantaloon by W. Buck, of old Surrey notoriety; Harlequin, Mr. John Warde; Columbine, Miss Emma Warde; Sprites by the Edouarde family. Mr. W. Randall appears as Old Father Christmas in a new introduction written expressly by Nelson Lee the Younger. Among other celebrities will be found Little Hiline and Sons, Signor Bologna and family, Herr Preskon, the newly-imported Danish gymnast, Duriah and Davis in new burlesque, Signor Bevani with his wooden-headed family, &c. A new stage has been erected in the centre transept, with new scenery painted expressly for the occasion. Arrangements have been made with Mr. George Tanner, inventor and patentee, for the representation of a golden shower, which made so great an impression at Her Majesty's Theatre. The Christmas revels at the Crystal Palace will command the attention of young and old.

#### THE CHURCH OF THE VENERABLE BEDE.

THE church of St. Paul, at Jarrow-on-Tyne, is one of the most interesting and remarkable of the Christian edifices of England; its history extends back nearly 1200 years, and it is a venerable monument of the great monastery in which Bede wrote his remarkable works. The church, of which he witnessed the completion, was almost unrivalled in the kingdom of Northumberland, for it was one of the few churches that had been built of stone; and it was adorned by its architect, Benedict Biscop, a noble Northumbrian, who was Abbot of the monasteries of Jarrow and Weremouth, with works of art brought from Rome. As from Iona, so from Jarrow, long before the days of Alfred, the light of religion and learning shone throughout Christendom, and the fame of Bede, the good-will of Kings, and the benefits diffused from it as a centre of Christian life and education, made Jarrow renowned throughout the world. The well-known mural inscription of King Egfrid's date\* belonged to the church and monastery of



INTERIOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, JARROW-ON-TYNE.

Bede's own time; and the tower and chancel walls present some characteristic peculiarities of early Roman architecture.

Twelve months ago a movement was commenced with the view of collecting funds to effect a complete restoration of this ancient fane; and the work has been going on for some time past, under the supervision of G. G. Scott, Esq., architect. Several interesting discoveries have been made during the progress of the work, and great care is taken in making the restorations. The cost will be about £3000. Sir Walter James, the Dean and Chapter of Durham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Durham, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the neighbouring landowners and employers of labour, have contributed liberally towards the fund for the restoration.

rents in the walls and arches to have followed. The evil was partially remedied by adding three large buttresses, and by thickening the lower part of the wall which faces the nave. To the fourth pier, however, no buttress was added, though, on examining the wall and arch by removing the plastering, I find it to be in a fearful state of disintegration, so much so as to excite one's wonder that it has not long since finally given way.

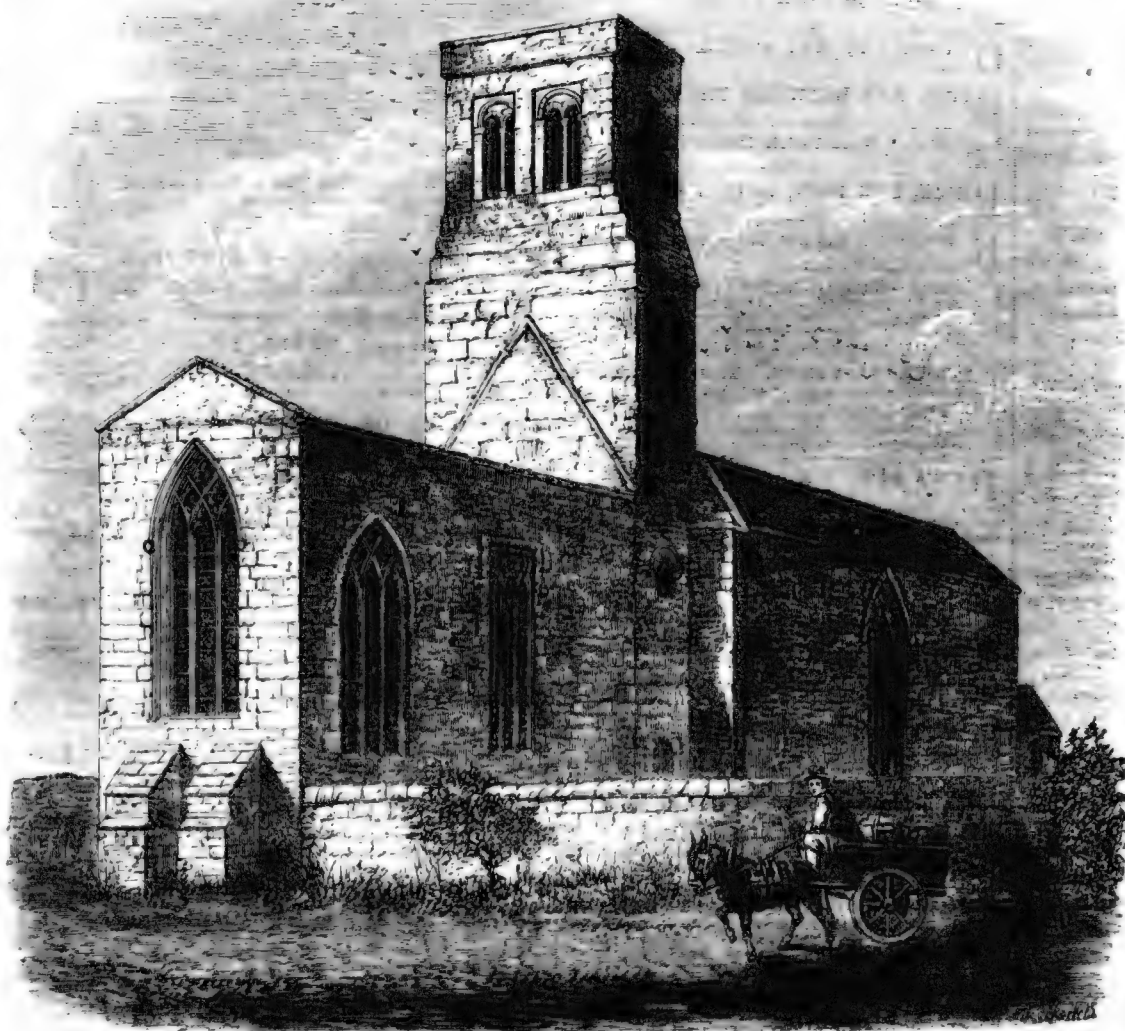
"I cannot consider that in the present condition of the tower there is security against its yielding to any storm from the south-west—its north-eastern limb being shattered and utterly unsupported. This cause of danger ought without delay to be remedied, which would be a work requiring considerable care, and involving a good deal of cost. At the same time, the foundations of the chancel wall should be

examined, underpinned, and strengthened. The required enlargement of the nave will, perhaps, be best obtained by the addition of a north aisle, and also by a slight extension to the west. As it would be pedantic to attempt to make this addition in the rude style of the early features, it should be in some simple and bold but unpretending variety of Gothic architecture, and the present nave should have a new roof, and be in other respects conformed to the same character.

"The present incongruous vestry should be rebuilt, perhaps, in such a form as to make a small transept to that side of the tower, as it appears intended to receive some such adjunct, and it would tend to strengthen its piers. It might, perhaps, be so managed as to facilitate the passage of the voice from the altar into the new aisle, which would be somewhat obstructed by the small size of the openings through the tower.

"There are arches, now walled up, which appear to have opened from the chamber above the vaulting of the tower eastward and westward into the chancel and nave, forming that chamber into something equivalent to a rood loft. One of these arches is much shattered; but, if restored, they might be opened, and the organ be placed in this position, which would be very suitable for it. I would not do away with the present Gothic windows of the chancel; but I think that the little Romanesque windows which remain should be in some degree opened out. The ancient door should also be opened and restored. The present flat roof of the chancel should be removed, and a new one formed, suited to the original roof-mark against the tower.

\* The following is a translation of the inscription referred to:—"This church, dedicated to St. Paul, was built in the ninth calend of May, the fifteenth year of the reign of King Egfrid; fourth of Coelfrid, Abbot, and under God the founder of the said church" (A. D. 685).



EXTERIOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, JARROW-ON-TYNE.



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LONDON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1865.

# UNINVITED GUESTS.

## A SENSATION DRAMA IN A NUTSHELL.

First Scene. Chambers in Crickett's Inn (see Illustration).

*Fred (staring moodily out of window).* It's a monstrous nuisance, Charley, to think that we should be here all alone and those fellows on the same landing invited. Couldn't we pick a quarrel with 'em before they go, and, at all events, spoil sport, even if we can't join in it?

*Charley.* What the doose would be the good? We don't even know the address, and I never heard the name before. Swell people, arn't they? The man opposite never mentioned the address.

*Fred.* What of it? We couldn't go if he had. No cards. Ah! Look here, Charley. Can't you guess why I'm so savage about it, and feel so precious lonely?

*Charley.* Doose a bit (*lights a fresh pipe*); but you're not much of company for a fellow, Fred.

*Fred.* Company! Confound it, no. You remember my little cousin, Bessie? Nice little girl, with golden hair and a petite figure; regular fair, you know, by Jove.

*Charley.* Rather. You've told me all about her a dozen times. You're to be married some day, arn't you?

*Fred.* Yes, if her guardians consent. But I say, Charley, this is one of her guardians, and he won't consent. Regular brute he is, though he has daughters of his own.

*Charley.* This is one of her guardians? Who, what? Which? Where is he?

*Fred.* Why, Old Sticknail. Fellow that gives the spread to-night that we're not invited to, and that carroty beast, Gambooge, is: and Bessie will be there, eh?

*Charley.* Oh! Ah! Yes! (*Smokes reflectively for nine minutes, and then suddenly leaps up and throws his pipe into the fireplace.*) Eureka! Ha! Ha! Yes, that's the ticket!

*Fred.* Is it? Well, I'm glad of it, if you think so: but don't do it again, that's all.

*Charley.* You can play the cornet, or at least you think you can; I've an old trombone in the lumber-room; we've both a lot of old toggery, and a couple of wigs that we had to act those charades down at Popps's.

*Fred.* Well, what then?

*Charley.* Don't you see?

*Fred.* Hang'd if I do.

*Charley.* Why, we're as dull as ditchwater here; let's go and soothe the savage breast. We're "The Waits." Do you see now?

*Fred.* Ha! Yes. Hurrah! A couple of light waits.

*Charley.* Ha, ha! And we'll go to the house and play before the parlour window. I know the address. We may see Bessie. We will go at once.

*Both.* We will; we will. (*They embrace, and proceed to disguise themselves as Waits; afterwards putting out the lights and closing the door.*) [*Exeunt mysteriously.*]

Second Scene. The taproom of a public-house near Great Gainsborough square.

*Enter CHARLES and FRED disguised as Waits.*

*Fred.* I say, Charley, I'm regularly pumped out. Must have something to drink, old fellow. Haven't seen her, after all, either. I must pick a quarrel with that beast Gambooge on our landing.

*Charley (whispering).* Prenez garde, Fred. Sit well back, and keep your hat on, man!

*Enter GAMBOOGE and a CABDRIVER.*

*Gambooge.* Now, you know what to do. Be at the door in half an hour, and, directly the lady comes out, have the door open and drive off with her to my place. You know the address: Crickett's Inn.

*Cab'y.* All right, Captin. Mayn't I drink yer 'elth?



INVITED AND NOT INVITED. (DRAWN BY C. ROBINSON.)



Gambooge. Go and be hanged!

Cabby. Oh! that's yer game, is it!

[Looks out of door, and whistles.]

Enter a CAD.

Cad. All serene, Snobby! I know's yer. What's the office?

Cabby. Come and get the cab ready. She's to come out in an hour; an', what's more, she'll have some of her gimcracks with her, or my name ain't Snobby Sykes. You comes arter me and gits on the box, don't yer see.

[Exeunt, THE WAITS following cautiously.]

Third Scene. A London Street. CADMAN with his vehicle, and CAD lurking about. Presently a door opens, and a Lady with a small box runs across the stage and enters cab. CAD leaps to the front seat, beside the driver, who lashes the horse into a gallop. THE WAITS spring from a doorway and give chase.

Charley. Go it, Fred!

Fred. Go it, Charley! [They overtake the cab and hang on behind.]

Both. How delightful is this resumption of the sports of youth!

Fourth Scene. The towing-path of a canal, with the arch of a bridge crossing it. The cab appears in a by-street, driving towards the water. Then stops suddenly, and screams are heard inside.

Cabby (dragging out a lady). Stop yer row, can't yer? else I'm blest if I don't pitch yer into the kin-nell. Now, come, hand over that there box. Here, Jim, jest you nail the ticker, and look arter a bracelet an' a necktie. Goin' to heck it with the Captn, was yer? Well, we'll put you in the road home, but meanwhile, we'll take care of these pooty articles. Wot's the hods so long as yer lappy?

[CABBY and CAD approach, one at each door of the vehicle, when enter CHARLEY, FRED, and FREDDY, 1 h.]

Charley (blowing the cornet violently in CABBIE'S ear). Tra la la la, ha, ha, ha, ha, a, a, a!

Freddy (with the trombone between the CAD'S shoulders). Ha! bom, bom, bom! ha, ha! bom, bom!

[CAD and CABBIE both go into convulsions.]

Charley (to lady). I know you, Miss Sticknail, and will protect you. We are both gentlemen, though our present appearance might lead to a different opinion.

[They close the doors of the cab, kick CAD and CABBIE into the canal and drive off.]

Fifth Scene. Same as First.

Enter CHARLES and FRED, carrying fainting lady between them in a "dandy chair."

Both. How delightful is a return to the spots of our youth!

[They place the lady in an arm chair and sprinkle her face from the water-jug.]

Miss Sticknail. Oh! generous protectors, how can I thank you? How—how explain my miserable folly?

Fred. Oh, I know all about it! Don't I, Charley?

Charley (in the manner of Mr Bedford). I believe you, my boy!

Fred. You'd made up your mind to elope with Gambooge. Well, I pity your taste; but still, if Bessie would elope with me I'd let her. Wouldn't I, Charley?

Charley. I believe you, my boy!

Fred. You see, we weren't invited to your party, though I'm Bessie's cousin, as you may easily see now I've taken my wig off; and so we go out as wandering minstrels. We hear, see, and say nothing. The Cabman plays Gambooge false; we follow, arrive in the nick of time, and here we are!

Miss Sticknail. Oh, if I could but get home, I would never, never do so any more. Tell me, do you think Mr. Gambooge could be false to me?

Fred. Not the least doubt of it, have I, Charley?

Charley. I believe you, my — at least, no, not a bit.

Fred. I believe he's married already.

[A loud knocking is heard.]

Enter a MIDDLE-AGED FEMALE.

M. A. F. Let me get at her, and I'll tear her eyes out! Look here!—look here!—here's the certificate and here's the ring! (Holds out marriage certificate, and takes wedding ring off finger.) My name's Martha Gambooge, and here I stay till I get my nails into that willin' G's whiskers!

[A loud knocking is heard. Enter Mr. and Mrs. STICKNAIL with YOUNG LADIES, and amongst them BESSIE, who throws herself into the arms of FREDERICK. Everybody talks at once for twenty minutes, when]

Mr. Sticknail (leading Bessie back to Frederick). Take her and be happy.

Fred (leading Miss Sticknail to her Papa). Take her and be happy.

[A loud knocking is heard.]

Enter GAMBOOGE.

Charley (leading Middle-aged Female to Gambooge). Take her and be happy.

[She claws him.]

Fred and Charley. Let us all be happy, and may none of our friends here be uninvited guests.

(Curtain.)

## PRINCE HYDRANGEA.

### PART I.

#### I.

SOME years ago, in a foreign country, there was a beautiful Prince, whose name was Hydrangea. Why he was so called can be of no consequence, because it is not recorded in the history of those parts, and history never omits anything that is of consequence. But he had brothers and sisters who were all named after different flowers, so that the Royal family itself was called a Flower Show by the public. There was Prince Cactus, who wore a red coat, and was made Generalissimo of the land forces; Prince Rhododendron, who always went about with an alpenstock; Prince Dandelion, who led the fashion and was the vogue at evening parties; Prince Poppy, who was fond of effervescent drinks; and Prince Canterbury Bells, who was partial to sacred music. Then there was the Princess Wildthyme, who studied horology and never kept an appointment; the Princess Camomile, who became an old maid and studied medicine; the Princess Columbine, who resented this conduct on the part of her sister by eloping from Court with a Perfect Cure, to the great grief of her Royal parents; the Princess Primrose, who wrote a treatise on etiquette; the Princess Campanula, sometimes called the Princess Elecampanula, to denote her attachment to sweetmeats; and the Princess Dahlia, who was, I regret to say, of a weakly constitution.

#### II.

All these names were such that the public could easily pronounce them, the only ones that caused any difficulty being Rhododendron, and perhaps Poppy, and these chiefly with people who stuttered. Rhododendron, if truth must be told, was commonly supposed to be two words instead of one, so that the Prince was often called Rhoda; but this was nothing compared with what happened to his brother Hydrangea, who was universally termed High Deranger by the people. This mistake was manifested shortly after the birth of the Prince; for when, upon the occasion of the festivities that accompanied the christening of his Royal Highness, his nurse brought him out upon the front balcony in his long clothes, to show to the excited crowd, they gave vent to their feelings of loyalty by loud cries of "Long Live Prince High Deranger!" Nor was this all; for in the illuminations which adorned the leading thoroughfares of the capital in the evening, the young Prince's name was everywhere spelt in accordance with this pronunciation—the only exception being that of the purveyor of dictionaries to the Royal family.

Now, it must be observed that the aged nurse who had attended the Prince's Royal mother through all her Royal accouchements from the very first, regarded this mistake of the people in a very melancholy spirit; for, when she was undressing him for that

night, she heaved a deep sigh as she patted his Royal back with the powder-puff scented with violets culled from the Royal garden, and pronounced these remarkable words:—"High Deranger he is called, and High Deranger he will be."

This prophecy—uttered in a whisper, of course, in order that the Queen might not hear and be distracted by it—was caught up by one of the ladies of the bedchamber, and remembered by her. Of course there were several of these ladies in attendance upon his Royal Highness, engaged in different offices conducive to his comfort; one to hold the powder-puff, one to hold the powder, one to hold a packet of Royal safety nursery pins, and one to see that none of the others left the room. Now this last one had no right to meddle in any way with the Royal pincushion, or any of the paraphernalia of the Royal nursery, because such matters were not in her Department. But early in the morning when the aged nurse awoke from a long doze (into which she had somewhat inadvertently fallen), and happened to cast her eye upon the pincushion, which was, of course, adorned with the Royal inscription, she observed, to her great surprise, that an addition had been made in the course of the night, unbeknown to her, and that it now read as follows:—

WELCOME, WELCOME, LITTLE STRANGER!

WELCOME, WELCOME, HIGH DERANGER!

This was a mysterious circumstance, until cleared up, and she immediately inquired of the bedchamber ladies, one by one, if they could account for it—all, except the one of whom we have just spoken. Of course, she did not ask her any question, the pincushion of the Prince not being in her Department. Failing to obtain any light upon the subject, the nurse considered it in the light of a supernatural coincidence.

#### III.

Now, the nurse immediately hid away the pincushion, and never produced it again until the Prince was a fine boy of nine or ten years old, at boarding-school. Whilst he was there, every effort was made to have his name properly spelt and properly pronounced. His Royal Highness cut out the word HYDRANGEA in the lid of his desk with his own hand, and in the copybooks of that academy the only copy that was ever set when you came to the letter H was *His Highness Hydrangea*. But, by the application to his youthful and inexperienced mind of most unjustifiable inducements, he was one night persuaded into submitting to have his name punctured in indigo upon his right arm with the point of a needle. Some of his schoolfellows, who were accomplices in the trick, kept his Royal mind so occupied during the process that he was not aware until it was all over that High Deranger had been printed in capitals upon his Royal person; but, of course, the inscription would never wash out, and his companions (for even a young Prince has companions, especially when at boarding-school) having assured him it was only their mistake, and that they were very sorry, he made it up, and stood plume-like all round.

When this was made known to the aged nurse, she exclaimed, as might have been expected, "I always said so!" and produced the pincushion from one of her boxes. What would this aged woman have said if she had lived to witness the subsequent career of his Royal Highness the Prince Hydrangea?

#### IV.

As the time drew near in which it would, in the ordinary course of things, become necessary for the Prince to leave the academy of which we have spoken, proceed to the university, and then finish his education in foreign parts, under the guidance of a tutor, according to the custom of Princes in that country, it was observed that his Royal Highness became handsomer and handsomer every week of his life. When the academy went abroad in procession to take the air, which was, of course, very often, it had to pass the garden-wall of the Minerva House Establishment for young ladies. Now, the young ladies at this seminary read Grecian and Roman history, and were perfectly familiar with the republican sentiments inculcated by Brutus, Epaminondas, and others; so that it could not have been from any foolish regard for rank or station, or from any desire to look at the star which the Prince wore upon his Royal breast, that, whenever the procession from the Collegiate Acad my passed in front of Minerva House, the young ladies, many of whom were extremely pretty, were in the habit of climbing up the walls and gazing down upon the assembled youth—or, rather, upon the Prince Hydrangea, who was, it must be said, a fascinating object at this period of his Royal existence. This—and, indeed, much more than this—was winked at, because he was a Prince; and some of the young ladies, more daring than the rest, would go so far as to drop over the garden-wall delicious presents for him, with copies of verses inside. These little gifts the Prince became dexterous in catching as they fell, because he had much practice; and many romantic incidents occurred, one of which ended in bloodshed. Sometimes it would be a present of bon-bons in a silver wrapper, with the motto, "Sweets to the Sweet!"—sometimes an unusually fine peach or nectarine; sometimes a miniature, with an original poem, such as this, for example:—

"Called High Deranger  
Thou well may'st be,  
For thou, my Prince,  
Derangest me!"

But the most admired of these presents was a floral one, which was considered particularly neat and appropriate. It consisted of a handsome bouquet comprising the whole of that Royal flower show of which mention has been made, but with a magnificent hydrangea in the centre and the following poem, also original:—

"Hydrangea! thou, my Prince's beauty speak!  
Thy colour is the colour of his cheek;  
But what, my pining heart, resembles you?  
Hydrangea, chemically turned to blue!"

The young lady who prepared this bouquet, having excited the jealousy of her companions both by the felicitous thought of the bouquet and the beauty of her poetry, was pushed into a corner of the wall, where they knew the ivy, being very thick, was haunted by spiders, hundred-legs, and other noxious creatures; so that, when the procession passed, she was unable to throw down her present with grace and aplomb: indeed, she fell backwards into the mould, amid the laughter of her companions; while the bouquet, being only flung in a partial manner, was caught in the overtrailing ivy, and hung there unnoticed by his Royal Highness.

Another youth, however, who had long envied the Prince the attention excited by his beauty, caught sight of it, and, surreptitiously snatching it from the ivy as he passed, slipped it into his pocket, where it lay crumpled up, so to speak, with some portions of gingerbread and a fragment or two of cobblers'-wax. When this somewhat unprincipled youth furtively opened his packet at bedtime, by the light of a vesta (of which he carried a box concealed about his person, though against the rules), and discovered that its contents consisted only of flowers and of poetry instead of sweets or fruit, his vexation was so extreme that he wept aloud. This called the attention of his schoolfellows to the occurrence, and he was detected in the very act of crumpling up the hydrangea, surrounded by the original poem which we have quoted. The news spread like wildfire over the Academy, and the Principal punished the thief by compelling him publicly to beg pardon of the Prince and to learn an imposition of a thousand lines on the immortality of the soul; for great attention was paid to the inculcation of religious principles at this academy, and every new comer was required, by the terms of the prospectus, to bring with him a prayer-book and half a dozen silver forks, besides giving half a year's notice of removal. But the offender had also to experience the effects of public indignation among all classes in the academy; for several youths, who were very fond of our Prince, and invariably supported him with their attentions when he opened a box of goodies from his Royal parents (of which he gave away what he could not eat), challenged the thief to fight them; so that, as we have before stated, the occurrence was followed by bloodshed, and

the playground was, on more than one occasion, saturated with youthful gore.

#### V.

It may readily be supposed that these events, being connected with Royalty, speedily reached the ears of the Lady Principal of Minerva House, who could now no longer help opening her eyes to the practice, which had been going on for such a time among her young ladies, of dropping presents to his Royal Highness the Prince. Feeling that, in the interests of morality and deportment, something should be done to vindicate the character of her establishment, she proceeded to make an example of the young lady who had been found out, and dismissed her from the place with an address, during the delivery of which she was much affected. Thus we see how Justice overtakes the guilty. When she was gone, the other young ladies, who were wholly destitute of originality, made up only bouquets to fling at his Royal Highness as he passed; and as there was now no one who could tell of the rest, they being all alike imitators of the dismissed young lady, the moral tone of the establishment was once again restored to unanimity. Perhaps we never see in the great world around us anything like these transactions at Minerva House. But the Prime Minister of the country, Wise Acher, so called because he was very wise and had severe attacks of lumbago, observed that the Lady Principal understood the whole art of government quite as well as he did.

Thus we may see at how early a point in his youthful career the prophecy of this Prince's nurse began to be realised. He was already a high deranger; and not only so, for being constantly in the habit of receiving presents of hydrangeas from the young ladies who were unable to strike out a path of their own and kept on imitating their disgraced companion, his Royal Highness conceived such a disgust for the very word that he declared that, as soon as he attained his majority, he would, by a public manifesto, repudiate the name of Hydrangea, and assume that of High Deranger.

By somewhere about the time at which the Prince had begun to turn sick (so far as Royalty can experience such a sensation as that of nausea) at these bouquets, the practice of throwing them at the Prince had received the stamp of public approval, and even the Lady Principal would pleasantly rally any young lady who took no part in the practice. Wise Acher said he had lived long enough to see many things of this kind; and, for my part, I do not feel bold enough to contradict a man who was so wise and suffered so much pain.

### PART II.

#### I.

We must now turn to another branch of our story. Virginia Creeper, for such was the name of the young lady who was sent away in disgrace, was a young person of amiable manners and much intelligence. She had been a pupil at Minerva House on terms of mutual accommodation. Her father, Old Creeper—so called because, being somewhat feeble and deformed, he went about on all-fours—was a wealthy but miserly perfumer, and consented to supply the establishment with nard-deletia (of which a considerable quantity was consumed there annually) in exchange for his daughter's education. His natural tendency and disposition was not towards perfumery, but towards disagreeable and nasty things of all kinds; such as toadstools, gas-water, rags and bones, old physic-bottles, old oil-cans, phosphorus, cat-skins, and other marine stores. But his daughter Virginia, who was, as may be inferred from her allusion to the blue hydrangea, of a scientific turn of mind, had discovered a method of distilling perfumes from these and similar unpleasant products of nature; and, though the aged man still inclined, of himself, to whatever was nasty, the money to be made out of this great chemical discovery induced him to enter the perfumery trade. As soon as ever his shop was shut, however, it was his custom to indulge freely in those pleasures for which nature had fitted him, and alone, in a retired apartment, he would revel in the odour of the above marine stores until daybreak, when he invariably retired to rest with a nose-bag on of his own invention.

When Virginia Creeper reached home, after a long walk through the wet, on the night of her dismissal from Minerva House, she found her aged parent on all-fours in the midst of his usual nightly pleasures. In vain, replying to his excited questions, did the amiable Virginia say how sorry she was for her indiscretion with the bouquet; her enraged father flung a repulsive object of some kind at her head, and, shrieking "Mercy, mercy!" she fell, fainting, on a carboy which had contained valerian—a peculiarly disagreeable substance, of which the old man was very fond.

#### II.

It is impossible, however, to follow day by day the fortunes of this unfortunate Virginia Creeper, and we are compelled to return for a time to his Royal Highness. As he advanced in years he advanced in beauty, and such, also, was the goodness of his disposition that he was accustomed to take long walks unattended (except, indeed, by an officer in plain clothes, who always followed at a distance) among the people of that nation, relieving the distressed, and encouraging the virtuous to persevere. But, owing to his extraordinary beauty, several young ladies, in different streets, fell ill of love for his Royal Highness, and it was resolved to call a public meeting to adopt a petition praying that something might be done. It was remarked by Wise Acher that this was the usual constitutional course, and he himself received a deputation with much affability. But it was left for the Prince himself—whose kind heart could not endure to behold the fairest maidens of the empire carried about on litters to obtain a glimpse of him when they were unable to sit up—it was reserved for the Prince himself to devise a remedy for a state of things so unprecedented and so lamentable to every rightly constituted mind. He desired the Court tailor to make him an over-all exactly resembling that worn by the man in the diving bell at the Polytechnic Institution, and in that he now habitually went abroad upon his errands of kindness among the people.

#### III.

One morning, when Virginia Creeper had stolen out with a small gift of eau-de-cologne to a poor neighbour, who suffered from neuralgic hemicrania, she happened to meet the Prince, in his now-ordinary-worn-in-public suit of clothing. Not only was he engaged in the act of presenting this poor woman with a packet of chloride of lime—an act in itself calculated to touch the heart of Virginia—but no attire could conceal from eyes like hers the symmetry of his proportions and the grace of his movements. She had, at Minerva House, studied optics, perspective, and drawing from the round, and from statuary. The eyes of his Royal Highness, too, were visible through the helmet; and Virginia loved! In answer to her bashful inquiries as to the name of the muffled visitor, the woman told her that the beneficent stranger was Incognito, and Virginia departed with a dreamy sense of having met with the word in the course of her studies at Minerva House Academy.

#### IV.

But her footsteps were followed. His Royal Highness, so long a High Deranger, was now to have his own peace of mind disturbed. He loved Virginia, found out her residence, and often visited her at the dark hour when her father was alone amid his marine stores. But the eye of Wise Acher was upon his Royal Highness, and one evening he was discovered. Although the friendship with Virginia had continued for a long period of time, and vows of constancy had been exchanged between the lovers, his Royal Highness had never yet imprinted a kiss upon her cheeks. It must be observed that his attire was of such a nature that he was invariably locked up in it before going abroad, and had to be unlocked and let out after he came home. This precautionary arrangement the Prince had himself ordered to be adopted, steadfastly refusing to take the key of his overcoat out with him, because the natural kindness of his disposition was such that if any young lady had requested him to let himself out for a moment, that she might look upon him, he would never have been able to deny the favour. Desiring, upon the occasion now referred to, to take a kiss, his Royal Highness suddenly



remembered that he had left his keys at home, and, dropping his arms in a despairing manner, said, "Virginia, I am locked up; the keys are at the palace; and I cannot kiss you!"

The charitable spirit of the season will, we feel certain, induce readers to believe that it is really want of space, and not any desire to suppress facts, which leads the narrator of these events to practise a brevity somewhat disproportioned to the intensity of the interest which must attach to a love-crisis so extraordinary, and indeed, perhaps, unprecedented. But Wise Acher, who had contrived to follow the Prince and was now secreted in the apartment, was a witness of this scene, and himself fell in love, on the spot, with Virginia Creeper. Resolved that she should be his bride, he stealthily quitted the scene and repaired to the palace, where he did not fail to represent in strong colours to the Royal parents of High Deranger the "degrading attachment" (such was his expression) formed by the Prince, and the *mésalliance* with which the Flowery Dynasty was threatened.

"My unfortunate son," said the King, on hearing the sad news, "is, indeed, a High Deranger! Never shall offspring of mine lead to the hymeneal altar the child of a marine-store keeper! But, speak, Wise Acher, what is your counsel in this case?"

Then Wise Acher recommended that his Royal Highness should be kept under lock and key, in his walking attire, until he consented to renounce Virginia Creeper. "There is not," said Wise Acher, "in all your Majesty's dominions a clergyman who would marry a man so dressed."

"Not if he were a Prince?" said the King, doubtfully. "I think not, Sir," answered Wise Acher; and, accordingly, this plan was adopted. The turnkeys of his Royal Highness's person were threatened with instantaneous decapitation if they unlocked him, and so he remained, night and day, in his diving-bell costume.

## VI.

Still, however, the Prince continued to pay his Royal addresses to Virginia whenever he found an opportunity of going abroad; and, having discovered that it was she who flung the bouquet of which we spoke, he endeavoured to soften the hearts of his parents by explaining her knowledge of chemistry and other sciences, which might make her, he thought, less unfit in their eyes for such an alliance. But his Royal mother only remarked that this made matters worse; for that the girl evidently possessed the power of changing him to a blue colour whenever she pleased by dropping some deleterious substance into his food.

In the mean time, Wise Acher did not neglect to press his suit upon the unhappy Virginia, who, however, still expressed a firm resolution to wed no other than Prince Hydrangea. In vain did Wise Acher represent to her the ridicule she would incur if, in addition to a father who went on all-fours, she had a husband who was locked up in diving-bell attire. She only replied, "I can never love another!"

## VII.

Hastening on with our narrative, we come to a night when Virginia was alone with her father among his private marine stores, and thinking, as was her wont, of her High Deranger. Her father had been much displeased with her for what he termed this infatuated attachment, and on this occasion he resolved to punish her by giving her an extraordinarily difficult task to perform in the perfumery line. By dint of continuous application, Creeper had invented a combination of marine stores so disagreeable that he felt certain the scientific talisman of Virginia Creeper would not have the power to obtain from it a perfume of any kind. This he now produced, proposing it to Virginia as a fresh trial of her skill. At first she was so overpowered that she felt as if she must decline the task; but, recollecting that it was her own father who enjoined it, she resolved to make an effort. Holding her nose with one hand, she with the other hand sprinkled upon the new substance seven drops out of a phial which she carried about with her. The effect was magical. In one moment the place was filled with the steam of an entirely new perfume, richer than all the balsams of Eden, and, as it appeared, of a somewhat anodyne or soporific quality: for her aged father, enveloped in the purple exhalation, fell back, in a profound slumber, upon a pyramid of mouldy goloshes, to which he was very partial.

Whilst her father lay in this trance, Virginia, turning over the marine stores, lighted upon a packet of legal documents and a miniature. She had barely found time to examine these with attention, when Wise Acher burst open the door and stood before her, prepared, as usual, to press upon her his odious suit.

## VIII.

Now Wise Acher was but little prepared for the reception which Virginia Creeper gave to him. Turning over the packet of legal documents, she said to him,

"Your real name is not Wise Acher, but Wise Head?" And he did not speak. So she went on:—"You once loved and wooed a maiden whose name was Sweet Heart?"

At this word a slight thrill shook the frame of Wise Acher. "You broke your pledged troth; and, an action for breach of promise being brought by the young lady's relations, you were cast in heavy damages?"

Wise Acher now looked up imploringly at Virginia Creeper, who continued as follows:—

"You could not pay them—you never can; and, to escape imprisonment and disgrace, you dyed your hair, caught the lumbago, and changed your name, the *copias ad satisfaciendum* being still in full force against you?"

With an appealing gesture, Wise Acher moaned aloud. "You would not hurl an aged man from the summit of a nation's councils to the abysses of a debtor's dungeon, would you?"

To this Virginia Creeper made no direct reply, but she said, "I demand that you release my Prince."

"I consent," said Wise Acher. "Let me show you that I can reward those who serve me," resumed Virginia, smiling. "You have a Skeleton in a Cupboard!"

Wise Acher shivered from head to foot. "Introduce me to that Skeleton, and you shall see what you shall see!"

At these words a sudden thought flashed through the brain of Wise Acher. He hurried away Virginia to his mansion, led her to the cupboard, unlocked the door, and exposed the Skeleton.

"You had better get inside," said Wise Acher, pushing Virginia in. Then he slammed the door, locked it upon her, and put the key in his pocket.

"Now," said he, rubbing his hands, "I have got them both; and my Virginia will soon come to her senses when she finds she has to choose between a Skeleton and Me!"

## IX.

A very short chapter must conclude this narrative for the present, for our space is exhausted.

When, after the lapse of a couple of hours, Wise Acher, who was not inhuman, opened the door of the cupboard to offer Virginia some refreshments, he was much surprised by the sight which met his view. Not a single bone of the Skeleton was visible; but, from head to foot, it was one gloriously-beautiful column of leaves and flowers—leaves of luminous young green, and flowers of the gleaming gold. Virginia Creeper had covered up the old man's Skeleton. But where was she? He could not see her; and, in much astonishment, he tied to seek her at the residence of Old Creeper.

Now, next day was the Feast of Sweet-peace and Forget-me-nots, which in that flowery country answered to our Christmas. Virginia, who was only hiding behind the Skeleton, ran out of the house the very moment she heard Wise Acher slam the door behind him. She went straight to the palace; and, having said, in reply to the footman, that she came from Wise Acher's house and wished to see the Prince, she was instantly admitted into the presence of his Royal Highness, with whom she had a most affecting interview. "My Prince," said Virginia, "the trial of our constancy is at an

end for the present. I had deferred until the eve of our great annual festival the disclosure of the secret which will release you from your irksome situation, because the appropriateness of the event will probably influence the mind of your Royal parents in our favour."

"Alas!" said High Deranger mournfully, "you cannot unlock me, nor can I unlock my coat."

"No," said Virginia Creeper; "but you can draw your arms out of the sleeves, and slip it over your head."

"Such," replied High Deranger, "is woman's wit. Who would have thought of such a thing?" And then, throwing off his coat and recovering from his surprise, his Royal Highness gave Virginia the kiss which had been so long put off, and the happy pair were married the next day. When it was over, the Royal parents thought it prudent to interpose no further obstacle.

On reaching his house again Wise Acher examined the cupboard with more deliberation, and found a miniature, with a note, in the handwriting of Virginia Creeper, to the following effect:—"WISE ACHER, for such you must now be to the end of your days, you will never again in this world see the Sweet Heart whom Wise Head was able to see. But I have, in pity, covered up with young flowers the Skeleton in your Cupboard, and I now leave with you a miniature likeness of Sweet Heart. So long as you are faithful to the recollections it will give (and memory is all you can now have, since you were once unfaithful), your Skeleton in the Cupboard (which, I regret to say, can never be removed) will continue to be covered with flowers.—VIRGINIA CREEPER."

It will be observed that, with her usual delicacy of feeling, Virginia made no reference to her imminent union with the Prince, but occupied her letter solely with the affairs of Wise Acher; and, indeed, he learned the event quite soon enough.

Now the Loves of Wise Head and Sweet Heart, and what interrupted them, and the Reflections made by Wise Acher upon the circumstance that the very means employed by Prince High Deranger to save pain to others were turned into superfluous pain to himself (which never happens, as Wise Acher observes, in other countries); also the Wars of Prince High Deranger, and how, to the great Disturbance of the Realm, he never slept with his fathers, but went on Deranging, with the History of the Wonderful New Perfume, and the Death of Old Creeper, is it not written in the Book of High Derangement?

W. D. R.

## THE SOLDIER-ANGEL.

A SOLDIER came riding, with a helmet on,  
Early in the morning; his breast-plate shone;  
A soldier in armour, with his visor down,  
Came riding on a coal-black horse, through our good town:  
All round the church-eaves, the icicles did hang;  
Sweetly in the church choir, the choristers sang;  
Gaily goes the soldier, with his armour clink-clang—  
Loud sounds the church bell, jang-jingle-clang!

All amid the white snow, in a red hood,  
All amid the bright snow, a little maiden stood;  
Her cheeks were of the crimson in the free December air;  
Mellow was the maid's voice, yellow was her hair.  
Then unto the soldier the little maid did say—  
"O, whither are you riding, soldier, I pray?  
O, whither are you riding, to cut and to slay,  
So early in the morning, upon a Christmas day?"

"Now, who are ye would stay me, when forth I do ride?  
And why should I delay me for any time or tide?"  
Grimly did the soldier behind his visor speak,  
But up spoke the little maid—a tear was on her cheek:  
"O Sir, I would but stay you, because of our good Lord,  
Who to be born on Christmas Day in pity did afford;  
And sweet is Christmas music on the merry harpsichord,  
But cruel is the clanging of the sword against the sword!"

O, in the saddle, angrily, sat up that soldier then,  
But the little maid began to sing "Good will to sinful men!"  
He drew his sword from out its sheath, and flashed it in her face,  
But louder sang the little maid of Bethlehem and its grace:  
Then, wondering, she began to look upon that warrior grim,  
For while she stood and sang, a change, a change came over him,  
A shining and a pleasant count that made the daylight dim—  
It was a beautiful angel, all in gold and purple trim.

"I am the Angel Gabriel, and forth I do ride,  
Early in the morning, upon the Christmas-tide;  
And to such as dare to slay me, in the name of our good Lord,  
A comfortable vision I am bidden to afford."  
He lit her to the saddle-tree, he set her up before,  
The horse shone white, and he shone bright, and terrible no more;  
And all the flaming heaven was bowed, wide open like a door,  
With Christmas music sounding loud, like seas along the shore,  
And the happy Innocents singing there, her courage to restore.

Now where did they ride to, the angel and the maid?  
And what was the vision which was unto her displayed?  
They rode straight into Bethlehem, the Star was in the sky;  
She saw the shepherds worship there, she saw the Baby lie;  
The cherubs there and the cherubim had silver on their wings.  
The seraphs there and the seraphim were crowned with golden  
rings;  
Glad was the maid when she saw these beautiful things;  
Loud sounds the church bell, sweet the choir sings.

W. B. RANDE.

## THE GREAT ZOOLOGICAL CHRISTMAS PARTY.

OUR young readers, who are already in full anticipation of the delights of the Christmas holidays, will be glad to hear that some very old friends of theirs have already commenced the festivities of the season, and that a grand entertainment has been given to several of those extremely happy families who are so ready to welcome us when we go to see them at the Zoological Gardens. All kinds of Christmas cheer and several very well-known games were represented on the occasion, and, from the owl, whose habitually late hours has given him the privilege of playing at Hunt the Slipper till midnight with a tiny mouse instead of an old shoe, to the great boa, who has actually sent himself to sleep with his own long tail, every individual has been included in the general holiday.

The part of the waits having been admirably performed by two or three Siberian and German visitors who were kept without their supper, wrapped in their long-tailed fur coats, until their wild chorus called attention to the fact of their being as hungry as wolves. This concert lasted till daybreak, when the young swans, and their cousins, the pelicans, of Wilderness-row, went out to the lake with the view of taking either a bath, or a little skating exercise if there should happen to be any ice, before breakfast. By that time Master Seal had had his usual plunge in cold water, and was quite ready for a couple of haddock with his morning roll; while Mr. Hippo Potamus had the chill taken off his shaving water in consideration of his recent arrival from Egypt. This carried everything on quite comfortably till it was time for Mr. and Mrs. Leon's snug little dinner-party; where, notwithstanding the ample provision of capital joints, the bones of the beef were picked as clean as castanets, without the slightest regard to the butchers' bill, which is now known by the name of "the cattle plague."

Two or three friends looked in to dessert, and his Highness Ram Chow Chumie, Prince of Elephantia, was pleased to receive a splendid *bonne bouche*, in the shape of a bushel bun, all decorated with rich sweets of ornaments.

The proceedings, which were carried on till a late hour, terminated in a lively game of Nuts to Crack on the part of the celebrated Joeko and Chickney family; but by that time the senior part of the company had retired, except the lively and humorous Mr. Ourang Outang who with his friend and relative Sir Bab Oon looked on

with no little approval, though the former gentleman, fearing an attack of his old enemy the gout, took the precaution of wrapping himself in his warmest winter dress and occupying his ordinary cosy arm-chair.

## OLD FOLK AT HOME AND YOUNG FOLK AWAY.

It is not "the lovely wanderer" who feels the full bitterness of parting. They realise it most whose sorrow grows day by day amidst all the mute tokens of a recent bereavement, the old familiar surroundings of the home that is, for a time at least, left desolate; who silently note the vacant chair, the portrait on the wall, the well-known autograph in the favourite book, the little nameless waifs and strays, debris of a broken interest.

There are hundreds of patient souls to whom this truth will bring a shade of grief at the present season of the year. Even amidst the honest holy mirth of Christmas-tide a reproachful whisper from a far off voice will reach their ears; the touch of a hand that is gone will recall them to a mournful sense of that deep monotone of grief heard beneath the sounds of the merriest carol that was ever sung. It is well that it should be so; for the wanderer has to return, and the yearning that he feels for home, even though it be for the home that he has too often forgotten, would turn to dull despair, if no long-suffering love awaited him. The Divine meaning and beauty of the great parable would be lost to the prodigal who came back to find no welcome, and saw only cold, averted faces round the hearth, that had been the shrine to which his perverted faith could turn with hope.

We are few of us too prone to dwell on the memory even of the dead. One use of the outward habiliments and signs of mourning is their power of conveying to us the lesson that there are sacred, solemn moments when our thoughts may well turn to the contemplation of our own selfishness and the readiness with which we forget those ties that death itself should not sever.

There is a time to mourn, and we want reminding of it long before it has passed away; and there is a time to be comforted, when we should put off our black clothes, and go out into the world again and join in all the affairs of life, none the less hopefully and cheerfully because of the softening influence that has come upon us by the near presence of death. We belong to life, and life is one; death has not divided it, it has but changed its aspect by taking away our friend, as it will one day take us, when we may hope to meet—at home.

In many ways we may be said to die daily; sleep is death in a sense, and parting may be even worse than what we call by the name of death. The removal of those on whom our hearts are fixed to an unknown land, a region of new hopes, new fears, perhaps new affections and forgetfulness of us. Oh! it is this yearning after love, perfect and eternal, and yet the unworthy doubt of it, that make parting and death both so bitter.

Those two old people sitting hand-in-hand, their hearts subdued with that abiding tenderness which comes of sorrow's perfect work; how they cling to each other now that they are near the close of life, as though in fear lest the last stay of each of them should be broken suddenly, and one or other be left alone, looking wistfully out across the sea to that shore behind the clouds. These letters, waited for with such longing, have brought no new pang, for sorrow has never deadened their hearts, and their hopes spring fresh and green through the rain of tears. Is it strange that their thoughts should stray to that quiet country churchyard where the grave lies under a pure pall of snow, and that the dead should seem even nearer to them than the living? He died so young, so full of promise, and though he lingered almost painlessly, seemed taken away in that prime of life which left his very picture on their memory with such unalterable distinctness. The others—those absent ones—have altered more than he. It may be that when they return they will seem almost strangers. That brave, impetuous boy, who was so gentle when he went about with his sick brother and delayed to join his regiment till the last, what is he like now? Perhaps a lean, bearded soldier, bronzed by the sun, and suffering from that wound of which he had written so lightly. Better not to inquire. If the fever should take a favourable turn he will be with them before the summer; and if not—well, there is a letter locked up in his writing-desk, and another in charge of that gaunt, bearded Hindoo who fans his hot temples and tends him day and night, to be delivered to an old comrade who will take his last words home and "break it gently to the old folk." But he will come; the mother's heart tells her so, and he is not really so far away as that merry, bright-eyed girl who has taken the duties of teacher, comforter, preacher even, along with those of wife. No wonder she gets along so well with the black brood who come and cling round her skirts at the school out there, beneath the thatch of great fan-shaped leaves. "She was always the life of the house at home," says the poor father, stifling a sob; and we thought the missionary work would kill her; but she takes to it quite naturally, bless her! What wouldn't she do that had love and kindness to commend it? But they are coming home, mother; they are coming home!

"I wonder where Frank is now? It's time we heard from him, for the owners say they have had news of the ship staying at Oadiz on the voyage home two days ago."

Ah, old lady, when your young harem-scarum comes back, and you take his head between your hands, and part the hair away from his forehead, you will see that the wild, defiant light has left those keen brown eyes, and that a changeful, half-humorous, half-solemn look has come into them—the look that belongs to those who go down to the sea in ships and see the wonders of the great deep. There are times when a sailor who is worth anything is amongst the most serious of men, and that reckless boy who left you three short years ago has had the weight of a great care upon him since; the care of a ship's safety and of men's lives. He is pacing the deck now with that "three strides and a turn" which make a "midshipman's walk," and his newly-disciplined soul yearns towards the home he left with such ungrateful alacrity. But he has prayed every night, "God bless and keep my father and mother, and let me see them once more before they die."

Will he have any news to tell of Kate and her husband far away there in Sydney by the sea, in that home where they have founded a new family with another name?

There is a letter, at all events, and it is comforting to know that the old portraits they took out with them are still upon the wall. "We shall drink to you both, dear father and mother; but your portraits must stand for your actual presence. The children are quite familiar with 'dear grandma,' though they have never seen her, except on canvas; and we do hope that we may come back, even yet. But who knows? Australians are not come-backative folks, and those who are doing well can't leave. So, on Christmas Day, at all events, at two o'clock in the afternoon (you will be a-bed and asleep), we shall look at the pictures on the wall and send our loves to you across the sea. Perhaps they will reach you, somehow, in a dream. Then we shall go into the garden by the beach, and sit and talk under the trees, and eat loquots, of which we have a great many growing near our house, and try to spend a Christmas as much like the old ones at home as a broiling midsummer day will permit."

What a budget of news for the one remaining girl—she who is so eagerly watching the flying country as the train whirles her home at twenty miles an hour, which is not half fast enough for her ardent thoughts!

"Ah! my dear, let us thank God that we have this one left; I seem selfish to say so, but I'm almost glad she made up her mind to be a governess, after her sorrow for Mark Gray was over. She must come home and live with us again; and who knows but we may be all together again one day. Come, come mother! I must go down to the station to meet Jenny, for you know what a place it is on Christmas Eve. Dry your eyes, dear wife; we have borne the brunt and the battle of life together for many a long year, and now we are wearing away to the 'land of the leal.' The Christmas bells ring out with hope and promise for old and young alike in this, that they will all go home at last. We shall have a deal to tell each other in heaven."

T. A.





A GREAT CHRISTMAS PARTY AT THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.—(DRAWN BY H. S. MELVILLE.)





OLD FOLKS AT HOME AND YOUNG ONES AWAY.—(DRAWN BY FLORENCE CLAXTON.)



## THE HAUNTED PUNCH BOWL.

THE Christmas party assembled at the house of Mr. John Clutterbuck—engine-hose and fire-bucket maker, of 27, Little Cliffe-street, Camberwell—was not at all a remarkable party. It was held in the parlour. Mistletoe hung from the centre of the ceiling and holly sprigs decorated the chimney ornaments, the bookcase, and the pictures hanging against the wall. It was yet early in the evening, though the lamp was lit, the hearth brushed up, the fire replenished, and, in orthodox Christmas fashion, the party had gathered in a half circle about it, while a tinkling of glasses at a side table, over which Mr. Clutterbuck presided, and an aroma of hot spirits and water with lemon in it, told that the time of yuletide had arrived. As for the company, it comprised the host and hostess, their son Bill (just out of his time and in the harness-making way) and his young woman, their daughter Maryanne and her young man Charles; Dobson, Clutterbuck's brother-in-law, and his good lady; and Bill's young woman's mother. That was all, unless you reckoned a seedy old young-looking man, half guest, half waiter, a connection of the family, but not an honoured one. Mudge was the name of this person. He had married and buried a niece of Mr. Clutterbuck, and through a series of misfortunes (faults his wife's relations called them) had come down in the world from the position of an auctioneer's clerk to that of a mere labouring odd jobber, who would go an errand, carry luggage, beat a carpet, or make himself otherwise "generally useful." One other method he had of gaining a livelihood, more lucrative than those enumerated, though, in the opinion of all who knew him, considerably less respectable. At the auctioneering period he had made the acquaintance of several brokers, and, when occasion served, he was happy to set for them in the capacity of "man in possession." A harmless, inoffensive person enough was Mr. Mudge, though reputed to be addicted to habits of intemperance, and commonly regarded as the disgrace of the family. Still, he was of the family, and on that account there was always a place for him at Mr. Clutterbuck's table at Christmas time.

"Did it ever come into your mind, John," presently observed Mr. Dobson to his brother-in-law, after the social glass had gone its first round, and everybody, including even Mr. Mudge, had settled down comfortably, "did it ever come into your mind, John, that either them books and magazines that come out so thick this time of year are nothing but a pack of crammers, or that, as a party-giving family at Christmas time, we ain't exactly up to the mark?"

"It certainly never did strike me so, William," replied Mr. Clutterbuck, looking towards his relative with a glance of astonishment, not unminged with uneasiness. The engine-hose and bucket maker rather prided himself on doing the right thing at this festive season. "It seems to me that we're pretty comfortable—comfortable for folks with their bread to earn before they eat it, that is."

"Comfortable! I should say we were, rather."

"We ought to be, if we ain't, with everything the heart can desire provided for us," observed Mr. Mudge, in a tone of solemn thankfulness, as he took a deep sip at his rum-and-water.

"That's right enough," said Mr. Dobson, who, as a foreman cooper at the docks, and a man with a name-plate on his door, and a maid of all work to answer the bell, was not to be balked in the expression of any opinion he might hold. "As Mudge says, we ought to be comfortable; and so we are. But what I mean is this: How is it that all the Christmas parties held in story-books and magazines are story-telling parties? It's the regular thing with 'em. They don't seem to have any particular advantage over us; they sit down before a jolly good fire as we are doing now; and they smoke, and they take their glass just as we are doing now; their parties are made up pretty much as ours is, except that we ain't got a grandfather amongst us—a circumstance which, let us hope, time will alter (giggling and slapping between Bill and his young woman), and then they fire away and tell stories. Not out-and-dried stories that everybody has heard before, but bran new Christmas stories. If I was somebody invited to a story-book party I should tell a wonderful story of a foreign ship coming into dock with mysterious voices heard aboard of her all the homeward voyage, and a skeleton afterwards found packed in a bale of indigo or something of that kind. You, you know, Bill, would have a story to tell about a house on fire; and you, Mudge—well, I don't exactly see what sort of story even a story-book chap 'ud make you tell. You'd be made to carry a murdered lady by way of luggage, or you'd find convicting blood-stains on a carpet you was beating, I shouldn't wonder."

Mr. Mudge, as everybody else laughed at the wine-cooper's delicate pleasantry, uttered the titter of a poor relation, and observed that he had no doubt that was exactly the sort of thing he should be made to do in a story-book.

"Now, what I want to know is, are them story-books crammers or are we a set of ninnies unable to do what other people find so easy?"

Put in this strong light, there could not be a doubt on the subject: the story-books were just a pack of hatch-ups, and that's all.

"Very well, then; I've got no more to say about it," remarked the foreman cooper, with a satisfied air. "If we can't tell stories we can sing, that's one comfort. Now, Bill, let's have the old favourite."

"The old favourite" boasted of a cheerful chorus, so that by the time it was ended everyone had had an opportunity to tune their voices and get rid of that first huskiness which affects all throats when an attempt is made to sing out of them, and everyone was quite ready and willing to start on his own account when his turn came. After the host, the hostess sang; and after that young Bill sang something funny, and his young woman followed, with "Beautiful Star," in a manner that made her whitesprigged muslin and gauze head-dress become her better than ever and brought tears of manly pride into young Bill's eyes. Then Bill's young woman's mother (who was a serious old person, and had only been invited because she made such a fuss about Maria going and leaving her at home all by herself), after much persuasion, horrified the party by a sepulchral rendering of "The Mistletoe Bough." Then, in compliment to Mr. Mudge, who had been heartier in his applause of the song and the singer than anyone else, the old lady called on him as the next singer.

But, although Mr. Mudge, as already stated, had applauded "The Mistletoe Bough" and emphatically declared to old Mrs. Mowler that in all the born days of his life he had never heard the ballad sung so much to his liking, there are grave grounds for the suspicion that he had not heard a word of it. Had anyone kept an eye on him, it would have been seen that since the discussion about Christmas stories and story-telling he had exhibited considerable uneasiness, sipping his liquor in an absent-minded sort of way, and frequently so forgetting his pipe as to be obliged to pull at it desperately to revive the all-but extinguished fire in the bowl.

"My turn! Oh, ha! just so; all in our turn, of course. He, he! But it was very singular, though."

"What is singular, Joseph? What are you thinking about?" remarked Mr. Clutterbuck, reprovingly.

"Well, I was thinking of two years—two Christmases since—if it wouldn't be considered too great a liberty, Sir. However, 'praps it isn't worth while thinking about at all. It is just as you say, Mr. Dobson; and I quite agree with you, Sir: it is never is done and it never can be done—out of the books, you know."

Mr. Dobson directed a glance at Mr. Mudge and then another, fuller of meaning, at Mr. Clutterbuck, which that gentleman instantly understood.

"That's only your first glass, is it, Joseph?"

"Only the first, and a goodish drop of that left at present, thank you all the same, Mr. Clutterbuck."

"Then what the dickens do you mean by drawing comparisons between me and doing somebody or something out of books two Christmases ago, Sir?" demanded the foreman cooper, growing a shade redder than usual in the face.

"I'm sure I meant no offence, Sir," replied Mr. Mudge, humbly; "what I understood you to say, Mr. Dobson, was that nobody except story-book people ever told stories round the Christmas fire, and what I said was that I quite agreed with you; and what I was going further to say was that, even when a person had in his mind

something like a story to tell, he had better keep it to himself, for fear he should make a mess of it."

"There I don't hold with you, Joe," replied the foreman cooper, mollified by Mr. Mudge's penitent and apologetic tone; "what I say is, if a person has got a story to tell, he should out with it like a man. That's what I should do if I had one."

"But suppose it was a very strange and unlikely-sounding story, would you out with it then, Mr. Dobson?"

Although Mr. Mudge addressed himself to the foreman cooper, his eyes wandered round the company, as though he wished for a general opinion on the subject. Everyone, including Mr. Dobson, responded that, to be a regular Christmas story, it should be strange and unlikely-sounding—the more so the better.

"Then," said Mr. Mudge, desperately gulping down the remains of his rum-and-water, "I think I'll make the attempt."

"You! What, out of your own head?"

"Bless you! Not out of my own head. A pretty head mine would be to get a story out of, indeed! No, it's all true what I'm going to relate—at least, 'praps that's going too far; for that china can talk and a golden guinea make faces at you is so far from seeming like truth that of course you won't believe it; I can't expect you to. At the same time, I declare to you that, having eyes to see and ears to hear, I believe in the truth of it, and always shall."

"As may be known to most of you here two Christmases ago I wasn't situated as comfortably as I am at this moment."

"Well, Joe, I invited you, and Amelia too, recollect!" put in the engine-hose and bucket maker.

"You did so, uncle, and very grateful we were; but it was a matter of business with me, which had been so slack for a long spell that it was almost a Christmas treat to attend to it when it did turn up."

"Three days before they sent for me from Levy and Hammer's, the Sheriff's brokers, and, said they, 'Joseph, we want you to go in at Medlar House, Tottenham. 'Praps it'll be arranged, and 'praps it'll come to a sale; there's no knowing. We don't want any fuss, you understand, but a man we can trust, and decent-looking, what'll pass for one of the lower servants.' I expressed myself grateful for the job, and that afternoon we went up, and got in without trouble and made the levy; and I was left."

"I don't know anything about the misfortune that had brought the family into the mess, but it was the queerest family I ever saw. It was a great rambling house, with a forecourt and rusty iron railings before it, and lying a goodish way back from the road. The house was large enough for forty people to live in, with a kitchen to match; but before I had been there an hour I discovered that the only people living there were two ladies one very old and bent and the other under middle age, and stately, and grand as a Queen; while, as for servants, there was an old woman, a sort of 'cook and general,' and an old man, who seemed to spend all his time in the grounds behind the house and only came in to his meals. Yet the place was full of rich, old-fashioned furniture, and pictures, and plate; so much so, that although the distress was for three hundred and odd, Mr. Hammer, in making out the inventory, did not think it worth his while to go through more than half the rooms."

"There was no sort of animosity against me on the part of the ladies, such as sometimes it has been my misfortune to experience. 'You will see that this person is made comfortable, Margaret,' the stately lady observed to the old woman in the kitchen; and so she did as far as setting a chair by the fire for me and bringing out a cold leg of mutton at tea-time, but she wouldn't be sociable. Of course, I wanted to know something of what the row was about, but she had nothing but 'I shouldn't wonder,' and 'I don't know,' for all my questions, so at last I got disgusted, and sat and smoked my pipe and spoke no more to her."

"Next morning Mr. Hammer came over to see how matters were going on, and, says the stately lady to him,

"Mr. Broker, is the man you have placed here trustworthy?"

"Since I depend on him to look after the sum of three hundred and thirty pounds fifteen shillings, you may rely on it that he is," replied Mr. Hammer.

"Very well, then, we shall go away and leave the place in his care for a few days," observed the stately lady.

"Very good, ma'am," said Mr. Hammer, politely, and away she went, saying no more."

"You'll have the old man and woman with you, I suppose, so you'll be all right, Joe," Mr. Hammer remarked to me as he went away. 'I shall call in the morning.'

"So I thought I should; but, just fancy how astonished I was when in the afternoon a hackney coach came and took away not only the two ladies with their luggage, but the woman too! When the old man came in to his tea I remarked to him,

"You'll have to make it yourself this afternoon, friend; the old woman's gone with 't'others."

"I know all about it," replied the grumpy old beggar; 'I'm goin' too, by-and-by; so you'll have to pig by yourself. You'll find enough in the pantry to keep you till I come back again, I dare say, and you can sleep where you slept last night.'

"Old friend," says I, 'I'm precious glad that you ain't a civil and desirable person to live along with.'

"Why so?" he asked.

"Because then," says I, 'I might have been sorry about your going. Don't hurry yourself back on my account.'

"So he had his tea and off he went, slamming the door, and he didn't come back again."

"I thought that I shouldn't have minded it much, but when the night set in—a pitchy, dark, windy night, with the rain pelted against the windows, and me in that great kitchen, with only the fire and a single tallow candle to light it—I can't say that I felt over comfortable. Not afraid, you'll understand, but lonely and anxious—especially when I thought of that lot of plate and things, the inventory of which I'd got in my pocket, and of that dreary forecourt that shut out the house away from all the rest of the world, as it seemed. There was no use in sitting up; so, about nine o'clock, I looked to all the bolts and bars I could find, and went to bed."

"Next morning Mr. Hammer came again. 'I didn't think they'd have left you all alone, Joseph,' said he, when I told him; 'but it doesn't matter; I ain't afraid to trust you.'

"No, Sir, I hope not," said I; 'but how about to-morrow, Sir?'

"How about it? What do you mean? Oh, that it's Christmas Day, I suppose? Never you fear on that score, Joseph. Even the burglars respect that day," says he; 'they'll be at home making merry, every one of them, I'll warrant.'

"Exactly so, Sir! But it wasn't on their account I spoke. They'll be jolly enough, no doubt, Sir; but—"

"But what, Joseph?"

"I shan't, Sir."

"You'll have your half a crown a day, the same as usual," says he. 'It isn't a regular working day, I know; but there'll be no deductions; so don't go making yourself miserable about that.'

"I was thinking, Mr. Hammer, couldn't I have my missus up here just for to-morrow?"

"Certainly not, Joseph; who ever heard of a woman in possession? It's against the law. Besides, she'd go ransacking all over the house. It can't be. Tell you what I'll do. I won't come over in the morning, I'll let it be till the evening, about five o'clock, say, and I'll bring you a drop of something to cheer you up."

"So off he went, and that miserable day and the Christmas Eve to wind up with passed. But I wasn't to be all alone on Christmas Day. I hadn't been up half an hour before I heard a gentle tinkling of the house bell, and who should it be but my poor girl, that's dead and gone now, come to spend the day with me. 'I couldn't bear to go to uncle's and think of you all by yourself,' said she, 'so I've brought a bit of beef, and things to make a little pudding, Jos, and a quartern of rum in a bottle, and we'll have a comfortable, quiet day.'

"Well, so we did. We had the bit of dinner and a glass of grog afterwards as comfortable as could be. But I couldn't keep her all the evening, though she'd liked to have stopped, and hinted that I might shut her in somewhere till Mr. Hammer had been and gone

away again; but nobody knows but those who have dealings with him what a nose Mr. Hammer has for smelling things out, so, though against my will, I wouldn't hear of it, and about dusk she slipped out and went home."

"Well, between five and six, I heard the wheels of Mr. Hammer's gig coming down the road, and presently he rang at the great clanging bell, and there he was. As it turned out, I might have kept the missus there and he not a bit the wiser. 'I can't come in,' said he, 'for I've give the boy a holiday, and there's nobody to hold the mare. It's all right, I suppose?'

"All right, Sir."

"That's a good fellow (he was always best-tempered after dinner, and he had had an extra good one that day, I suppose); I haven't forgot you, you see; and he took out from the back of the gig a little parcel. 'Catch hold,' said he; 'it's enough to cut the mare's ears off a-top of this hill. Don't go getting boozey, now, and forgetting the bolts and bars.'

"And while I was thanking him he was up in the gig and off back to London. When I got into the kitchen I opened the parcel, and was quite cut up, as one may say, at Mr. Hammer's goodness. There was full a pint of rum in a bottle, and the carcass of a goose, with good picking on it, and a lump of Christmas pudding bigger than the whole one the missus and me had had for dinner. I felt bound to drink his health on the spot, and so I did out of a teacup, there being no glasses handy. After that I had a bit of goose and some of the pudding, by which time I felt on much better terms with myself than might have been expected. I felt bolder, too, somehow. Why not make yourself as comfortable as circumstances will permit? was the question I asked myself. Why stay down in this miserable kitchen at all when there's a handsome room up stairs with the fire already laid and an easy chair to sit in, and a warm rug for your feet? Why, indeed? No one had ordered me to stay in the kitchen; besides, even if they had, I submit, ladies and gentlemen, that a little latitude was excusable at such a time."

"So, without thinking further about it, I carried my tallow candle up stairs and set light to the fire in the grate and lit the two wax candles that stood on the mantelpiece. Then I fetched up my rum and the tobacco the missus had brought me, and prepared to make myself Christmasy. Looking round the room I spied a punch-bowl atop of a bookcase, and then it came into my head that I would do the regular Christmas thing, and have a bowl of punch and be jolly."

"I didn't know much about punch-making, but I was aware that hot water and lump sugar and lemon went towards a brew, and each of these materials was comeatable; so, while the fire burnt up I set about the job, and in ten minutes made about a pint and a half of piping hot liquor fit for a king to drink. The glasses were locked up, but the punch ladle itself came in quite as handy—handier, I may say, on account of its handle."

"Well, I made myself happy. I sat in a deliciously cosy arm-chair, and I put my feet on a lovely ottoman, and I lit my pipe, and I drank the health of every one of my friends. I don't know where Mr. Hammer bought that rum, but nicer or more comforting spirits I never tasted. It quite melted everything like bitterness of feeling out of one, so that by the time I had drank the health of all my friends I began to feel forgiving towards my enemies, and drank to the health of the mildest amongst them, and to the amendment of such as had always showed themselves implacable. You will understand, if you please, that I did not hurry myself over this health-drinking, but reflected and thought over the merits and virtues of each friend before I toasted him; otherwise, I should not have been surprised—nor, I daresay, would you—if I had felt the least degree muddled. But when I tell you that a long two hours elapsed ere I even began to drink to my enemies, you will, I am sure, readily believe me when I tell you that I was as sober then as I am at this moment."

"I must have been, and I will tell you why. The noise that first attracted my especial attention to the punch-bowl was of so slight and insignificant a character that nobody but a man with his shrewd wit about him would have noticed it. You all have heard the small, chinking, singing sound an earthenware vessel with a flaw in it makes when hot water is poured into it? Well, it was precisely such a sound as that, seeming of course louder than it otherwise would because of the surrounding stillness. I couldn't make it out at all. The bowl was empty to within two inches of the bottom, but though—having nothing else to amuse me, you see—I examined it most carefully, not a trace of a flaw could I discover. I tapped the bowl with the ladle and it rang as sound as a bell. As soon, however, as the ringing had subsided the humming noise began again, louder I think than before. If there is anything I dislike it is being perplexed and worried by trifles; so I drank up the remainder of the punch in order to be able to have fair handling of the bowl and find out what ailed it. My curiosity made me hasty. I didn't ladle out the remainder of the punch, I took the bowl up in my hands and emptied it that way, and in an instant, ladies and gentlemen, I was face to face with the mystery."

"Literally face to face with it, as I sit here a living man. At the bottom of the bowl there was an old George the First guinea, head uppermost, a pig-tailed, fat-cheeked head; and just as it was on a level with my eye the fat cheeks wrinkled with a grimace, and the little pigtail stuck out as though in horror. The mouth opened, and the battered golden lips moved as plainly as you may see my lips moving now."

"A hack! a hick! laugh! Fore gad, you impudent second-rate," spoke the head, "what d'ye mean by it? S'death! I never came so nigh to being poisoned since I've lived in a punch-bowl! Who are you, Sirrah! Don't sit there, like a stuck pig. Who are you that dare wake me up by drenching me with vile pot-house liquor, and leading me to suppose that Christmas has come again?"

"I was very much alarmed, as you may suppose; still I had done no wrong, and had nothing to fear."

"I don't know who or what you may be, natural or supernatural," I replied, "but I give you my solemn word of honour that you accuse me wrongfully; the liquor I have been drinking was not pot-house liquor, and this is Christmas Day!"

"What!" exclaimed the guinea, aghast, "it is Christmas Day, and I alone here with a stranger? Nay, this must be some knavery. Turn me round, that I may satisfy myself with my own eyes."

"I did as the head requested, and was very glad to get rid of the dreadful little face, though only for a half minute."

"Yes," I heard the head say, in a sad voice (it sounded unearthly and hollow, coming out of the depth of the bowl), "it is Christmas Day; the almanac on the wall declares it. Christmas is here, but where is the mistletoe? Where is the holly, the gay lights, the merry dancers? Tell me, O man! where are all these?"

"Sir," said I, turning the bowl round again, "all I know about the matter is, that the day before yesterday, in the afternoon, the only individuals in a position to order gay lights and mistletoe, or to dance, on this establishment, went away in a hackney coach, and I haven't set eyes on 'em since."

"Two ladies, said you?" asked the distressed and disfigured head.

"An old lady and a middle-aged one," I replied.

"Lady Medlar and her daughter-in-law," and the head shook in a melancholy manner on the surface of the guinea, "and where was Sir Charles? Young Sir Charles, I mean, who kept such jolly company after his father died?"

"I haven't the pleasure of knowing anything of the gentleman you mention," I replied. "I only know that, being in the house all alone, I thought I might take the liberty of making myself as comfortable as circumstances would permit."

"But how came you in the house all alone? Who are you? What are you? You have not the features of any Medlar in my recollection, and I have known them a hundred and fifty years and over."

"No! Sir," I replied, "I am here merely in the execution of my duty. I am in the employ of Mr. Hammer, Sir—Levy and Hammer, Sheriff's brokers, Sir."

"What!" exclaimed the dismayed head, its eyes starting and its



pigtail standing almost upright, 'what—what has the house of Medlar to do with brokers?'

"There is an execution in the house for the sum of three hundred and thirty pounds fifteen and—"

"But I was not allowed to finish my observation. In the midst of it the golden bell uttered so terrible a cry that, in my fright, I dropped the bowl on to the bar of the fender and smashed it into twenty pieces. At least, that is how I found it when I recovered my senses; for the sudden fright of that cry drove me into a state of insensibility. The fire had gone out, and the mysterious guinea was lying dead and cold, amongst the ashes."

"So, that was how the punchbowl got broken, eh, Joseph?" remarked Mr. Clutterbuck. "I heard that it was, in some way, because of a broken punchbowl that you got discharged from Levy and Hammer's."

"That is the whole truth about it, from first to last, Sir!" replied Mr. Mudge; "and I should have revealed it ere this, only as I before remarked, it is such a strange-sounding story."

"Well, so it is," observed Mr. Dobson, winking at his brother-in-law. "What they said, you know, Sir, and the pretence on which they stopped my four days' pay, was, that I got tipsy and knocked the bowl off the table."

"You don't mean that, Joseph?" said Mr. Dobson, with such gravity that Mr. Clutterbuck was tickled almost into convulsions of laughter, and everybody else laughed, and then the grog went round again, and everybody drank to the haunted punch-bowl; and, nobody else having a story to tell, singing once more became the order of the evening. J. G.

## COLONEL CRANKETT'S SINGULAR EXPERIENCE.

RELATED BY HIMSELF.

MY name is John Petrel Crankett. I was christened John because it was the name of my father—at least, so my mother told me—and I was christened Petrel because I was born on board of the Petrel, off I don't know where; for sometimes my mother told me off one place, and sometimes off another; and I think she must have been insensible at the time, and didn't know where I was born. Not that it is of any consequence, for I have knocked about the world all my life, and don't care more for one spot than another, so that the rations and liquors are good, and the dollars, doubloons, or sovs., as the case may be, come in quickly.

I don't remember when I was first called Colonel, or why. I am not a Colonel; I have never been in any army, though I have several times fought both on land and sea, and would fight again if my person or property were attacked. Not that I like fighting for fighting's sake; but when I want a thing done, and put my foot down, I must have it done, and will. It is my nature to. Perhaps it is for this reason I have been so long called Colonel. I am generally the head of what I undertake. I can command a ship and my own temper, which is more than most men can say, to speak truthfully. I am not married, and never have been; I never mean to marry, for I cannot control women—and, if I could, wouldn't.

When first I realised a few dollars I set myself down upon an empty hoghead and held inner communion. I inquired of my soul and spirit in what manner I could best invest my talents, energy, intelligence, zeal, strength, and dollars. I had travelled a good deal, and had seen many sorts of men. What I wanted to do was to embark in a speculation in which the men I employed were of a weaker and more easily reconciled spirit than myself. I wanted to be the strongest nature; I wanted to be the centre of a knot whose foibles I could manage. Now, as far as I have observed, and though no scholar, I am smart; I keep my eyes open when I walk, and I am a live man—as far as I have observed, the principal weakness of all men is vanity. It is his "master-passion," as a poet might say. Conquer a man's vanity, and you have him. Rub him down the right way of the fur of his mind, and he is yours body and soul, tied up in a Tom Fool knot.

Also, to control men, it is necessary that they should be simple-minded and kindhearted. They mustn't want too much pull in the bargain. They should be folks that you can pay in other coin than that which is metallic. They should be soft as butter, while you are sharp as steel. The odds should be in your favour as much as the odds are in favour of a razor going through a pound of flesh.

Also the speculation in which I wished to embark must be one which was remunerative and easy, giving one access to and control of the money realised. In short, I concluded to speculate as a theatrical manager.

It is a calling that is easy, remunerative, and wants neither talent, manners, nor education; in fact, to the manager of a theatre education is a disadvantage. Here is a bit of logic to prove it. The majority of the people who pay to go to a theatre are—I mean as regards their tastes—rough and vulgar. I am rough and vulgar. I know what pleases me; therefore I know what is likely to please the rough and vulgar. *Per contra*—I know that bit of Latin from book-keeping—very few who go to a theatre have tastes that are delicate or refined. A manager who has had the misfortune to be educated caters for the delicate and refined—therefore for the few; therefore he goes to smash, horse, foot, and artillery. Anyone who notices those sort of things will remark that it is always your gentleman manager who is ruined, whereas your rough, who begins with nothing, gets on. (Mem. *Anyone* may make a fortune by theatrical management. It is the easiest thing out.)

Of all people in the world, actors and actresses are the most easily led,—the most gentle, patient, simple, and docile. They are more like charming, spoiled children than men and women. They have but one failing, and they have that in heaps—vanity—which any man who cares more for dollars than glory—glory meaning to actors applause and big letters—may work on as he likes. They don't understand the value of money; they would rather one little boy clapped a pair of dirty hands together when they came on the stage than have half a sov.; it makes their hearts dance and their eyes sparkle. Poor things! they know no better; they don't realise the world—that is, not the real world. Any man with a small capital may work them as he pleases; and many men with small capitals, or no capitals at all, do.

So I elected to speculate in theatrical managements. I have now talked enough about myself—which is a thing I hate to do—and will begin my story, in which I shall only use the I when it is necessary.

I had been about two years a manager, and a spirited and discerning public had showered their approval upon one whose constant endeavour was to merit a continuance of those favours which it was ever his study to deserve, when I fixed up a theatre right straight upon the gold diggings. It was during the gold fever. I knew gold was about, and where it was about that some would stick to my fingers. So I built a big shed, and decorated it, and opened the Theatre Royal—! I can't exactly tell you where it was. It was a very wild place, and a new gold district; and so, with the kind permission of the ladies and gentlemen, I will call it the Theatre Royal Molynox—Molynox being the name of a truly great hero of the ring.

It would have done sore eyes good to have seen the company I got together—and couldn't keep together; for every man who arrived kept neglecting his professional duties to go digging, and the women got married as fast as they could, and some of 'em faster. To be sure, they were not real, regular actors and actresses, because then they would have rather acted than made fortunes. However, I needn't describe my company, which is lucky for me, and also lucky for them. But I must describe one man—he was a corker. His name was Mr. Isambert Saint Claremont, and he was my leading tragedian.

I have said that, as a rule, actors were a patient, gentle sort of people. Isambert—or, as I called him, Sam—was not; he was the exception. He was a splendid actor, to my taste, and had a grip like a vice. He was the handiest fellow with his fists I ever saw—more like a professional than an amateur. He stood five feet eleven, had lovely shoulders, and just the kind of knuckles that tell. He was bony and wiry—never had any nasty, flabby, unnecessary flesh muffling his muscles, and could drink neat spirit like water. He had black hair, cut short; and a very leary-looking pair of ears. He never looked straight at you. He couldn't. His eyes were

of that queer sort of light blue that you always see in eyes that dance about—those sort of eyes that have in their look a little drink, a little *del. trem.*, a little affectation, and a little raw madness—the genuine thing.

Isambert Saint Claremont, the eminent Californian tragedian, had a wonderful voice. He could roar like thunder, and he always did roar in tragedy, which was the chief cause of his popularity. The diggers like the thing hot and strong. He could shout loud enough to deafen you, which he often did; and he could drink deep enough to drown you, which he often did. So, ladies and gentlemen, with such powers of shouting and drinking you can imagine what a magnificent tragedian he was.

I don't know how or when Isambert came out to Australia. I found him there. Directly I clapped eyes on him I said to myself, "Soldier and sailor, and been in the habit of receiving orders and obeying them as a regular thing; also of doing certain things at certain times." He was very polite, and always said, "Yes, Sir," or "No, Sir," when spoken to. He had a scar on the Opposite Prompt side of his mouth. He said he got it from another actor when fighting the combat in "Macbeth." He was extremely punctual in his payments, never ran into debt, and had a very civil manner—almost too civil; indeed, I thought his ways of speaking those of a respectful cuss.

He was a queer bird. I remember, one night, at Molynox, we had a very good house, and that very evening I won a revolver of a digger by betting him that he didn't know how to spell the word parallel. Sam—that is, Isambert Saint Claremont—came up to me, after playing W. Tell ("W. Tell" was always a favourite piece at the diggings, for the diggers like revolvers and liberty), and he said to me, said Isambert:—

"Colonel, will you give me leave to go home?"

"Home, Sam?" I answered. "Why you've got to play in the farce." (The farce that night was the highly-popular and side-splitting screamer "The Rendezvous," and Sam had to play Captain Bolding in it, for he was very good-natured when in liquor, and I had asked him to oblige me when in that state.)

"I know," said he.

"Captain Bolding," said I.

"I know," said he again, "but"—

"But what?"

He hesitated and then said, "Colonel, the fact is, I've broken my arm."

"Broke your arm!" I said. "Why, how on earth did you act with it?"

"I managed to get through somehow, Sir," he answered; "but now I'm done up."

"I never heard anything of this," I said. "How did you break it, and when?"

"Colonel," he said, "I'm not strong enough to tell you now; and if I don't get home directly I shall faint straight off. I must send for the bonesetter."

This extraordinary man had acted through five acts with one arm broken. Of course, I saw him home, and got somebody else to go on for Captain Bolding. He soon got better, and reappeared in a round of favourite characters after his recent and severe indisposition; but he never told me how it was he managed to break his arm.

About three months after, just about Christmas time, we had a great stir at the Theatre Royal, Molynox. Isambert had been up the country to see a friend, and we had been playing a grand comic Christmas pantomime, which was a failure—so much so that I was glad to go back to the legitimate\* again. So I got Isambert to return, and I also got hold of a great card—the celebrated and eminent tragic actress and tragedienne, Mrs. Anna Camperdown. Poor Mrs. Camperdown had recently met with misfortunes, and was happy to accept the offer which I made her; and I, knowing that she was short of money, was, of course, enabled to offer her terms which, at another time, she would not have accepted.

Mrs. Anna Camperdown had been giving readings on some neighbouring gold-fields, and realised enormously. One night, as she and her husband were returning to their location, her husband carrying their realisations, they were attacked by a man and robbed. Mr. Camperdown, who was a little fellow, but game as ferrets, fought hard; but the stick-up† was tall and powerful, and armed. He stabbed little Camperdown several times, and made off with the winnings. When they arrived in Molynox, Camperdown was in a dying state, and his wife half distracted, for she loved her husband in that gentleman-like, hugging way that tall women who have good health do love little fellows who are rickety. She wasn't in the humour to make bargains, so I got her services cheap. I rode over to Sawney Bean station, where there was a printer, and ordered some as fine posters as were ever seen upon the diggings. They announced

Theatre Royal, Molynox.

Immense Attraction!

The Legitimate Drama for Ever!

Genius! Talent!!! and Imagination!!!

Floods of Tears and Rears of Laughter!!!!

Mrs. Anna Camperdown!

and

Isambert Saint Claremont!

as

Mrs. Haller and The Stranger!!!

On Monday, January—, 18—.

Well, Mrs. Anna Camperdown arrived, and with her her wounded husband; and what a sight he was! He had been awfully mashed. His head looked like tomato-pulp; and his wife tended on him like an angel. Whenever she came out, the men took off their hats to her, and she used to bow to them like a queen. The diggers went mad about her. I hired two or three smart chaps to go about and say how she had fought the stick-up and defended her husband, and raised a tremendous enthusiasm. "She was lovely, virtuous, and had fought in defence of her husband, her dollars, and her native land"—so I got my fellows to say; and the diggers serenaded her (my men got up the serenade) and cheered her until she had to come out and ask them to go away, as the noise disturbed her husband.

"The Stranger" being an old piece, we did not rehearse it until the morning of the play-day; nor was it until that morning that Sam—I mean Mr. Isambert St. Claremont—arrived. I knew him to be a man of his word, and so that gave me no trouble. I met him at the store, and we liquored up.

"Well, Sam," I says, "we play 'The Stranger' to-night."

"All right, Colonel," he said. "My luggage is here, in two donkey-carts."

"Who do you think," I asked him, "I have got to play Mrs. Haller?" for he did not know of the engagement I had made.

"Don't know, Colonel," said he.

"Didn't you see the poster outside?" I asked.

"No, Colonel," said he, "I came in by the back of the store."

"Come round and look," I said, "and I'll show you a poster the like of which has never before been attempted in this southern hemisphere."

He walked with me, and I said, as we were going, "Sam, you often say I never get heroines to act up to you. What do you think of that for a Mrs. Haller, eh?"

I had just brought him round the angle of the store, on the side on which the big poster beamed in all its printed majesty.

I looked into Sam's face, expecting to see there pleasure and even gratitude for the length of letter I had given him—he was as white as a sheet.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Nothing," he answered. "Cramp in the stomach, Colonel—cramp in the stomach!"

"Well, try some Bourbon whisky for that. Stunning poster, isn't it?"

"Beautiful, Colonel, beautiful!" he said, and his teeth chattered like a pair of nigger minstrel's bones.

"You're awful bad, surely; come and try some whisky."

I took him back into the store and we liquored up again.

\* The legitimate drama—the plays of Shakespeare and other plays in five acts.  
† Highwayman.

"And now," I said, "if we walk slowly, we shall just be in time for rehearsal."

"Colonel," said Sam, "I'll go and look after my baggage, and follow."

There was a quick, shifty look in his blue eyes as he spoke that made me suspect something wrong. It came flash upon me, like a streak of lightning, that he wanted to break his engagement. He was jealous of Mrs. Camperdown's name being posted in as big letters as his own, and meant to throw me. I held my tongue, and pretended to take no notice of his changed manner; for he had been very jolly when we met, and he had turned as cold as a codfish since he had seen the bill.

"Here's Jimmy (a man I employed) coming," I said; "he'll look after your luggage; so come on to rehearsal now." All this time I was thinking who I could shove on for The Stranger if Sam slipped me.

Up came Jimmy to tell me that Mrs. Camperdown had sent him to say that Mr. Camperdown was worse, and that she must be excused from attendance at rehearsal that morning, but she would play at night, whatever might happen.

"Very well," said Isambert. "Jimmy, you bring my baggage on to the theatre, and I'll walk with you, Colonel."

So we walked to the theatre and he rehearsed. I kept my eyes on him the whole time, for his odd manner made me uneasy. He seemed to want to slip away. When rehearsal was over, I said to him,

"Sam, we'll spend the day together. Come and dine with me, and I'll mix a glass of punch after dinner."

"Thank you, Colonel," he answered. "I've to look out my wardrobe and—"

"Never mind; I'll help you," I said. "Come; I'll take no denial, and we'll have a jolly day." I resolved not to let him out of my sight for a second, and I didn't. I watched him like a cat, and the more I watched him the more nervous he grew. I attended him to the theatre and helped him to dress. He stuck a lot of hair upon his face for The Stranger, and I remarked to him (that I never saw him make up like that before).

"No," he said, with that queer look about the eyes; "I like to make a change in these things. It—it's a new conception of the part."

The house was crammed, and Isambert, when he stalked on in his suit of black and furs, and beard, was cheered tremendously; but his reception was nothing to Mrs. Anna Camperdown's, when she sailed on in her white muslin. I thought the diggers never would have given over yelling. She was a brave woman, and bore it like a rock. And when I thought of her husband lying in his bed like a smashed poulter, and of her coming out to act, and looked at her black eyes and tall queenly ways, I felt proud of having engaged her, and resolved to renew the engagement on the same terms if I could persuade her.

Most people who go to theatres have seen "The Stranger," but I must recall, ladies and gentlemen, to your memories that at the end of the fourth act, Mrs. Haller is introduced, for the first time, to The Stranger, and recognises in him the husband she has deserted at the same time that he recognises the wife who has abandoned him. The words and action in the book of the play run thus, the Count and Countess Winterson, Baron Steinfort, and Mrs. Haller being on the stage:—

Enter SOLOMON (L).

Solomon. The Stranger begs leave to have the honour.

Count. Welcome! welcome! Show him the way.

Enter THE STRANGER.

Count. (Turning to meet THE STRANGER, whom he takes by the hand). My dear Sir, Lady Winterson, Mrs. Haller.

Mrs. Haller, as soon as she sees THE STRANGER, shrieks and swoons in the arms of the BARON and the COUNTESS. THE STRANGER casts a look at her, and, struck with astonishment and horror, rushes out of the room (L); the BARON and COUNTESS supporting Mrs. Haller; COUNT standing motionless, in great surprise.

END OF ACT THE FOURTH.

I was standing at the wing, and I had noticed nothing particular, except that Isambert had not seen or been introduced to Mrs. Camperdown, but had kept diving down into his dressing-room directly he was off the stage; but, as messengers kept arriving to Mrs. Camperdown telling her how Mr. C. was progressing, I thought that was only delicacy on his part, and that it did him credit. I was watching the great effect in the fourth act, from the prompt-place, ready to ring down the curtain. On came Solomon (old Landyn), who said that The Stranger wished to have the honour. The Count (young Arthur Perkins) said, "Welcome, welcome; show him the way." On stalked Isambert. Young Arthur Perkins said, "My dear Sir, Lady Winterson," and introduced Miss Danbillard, the Countess. Then he said,

"Mrs. Haller!"

According to the stage directions, Mrs. Haller (Mrs. Anna Camperdown) as soon as she saw The Stranger (Mr. Isambert Saint Claremont) shrieked and fell back into the arms of the Baron and the Countess (Old Speery and Miss Danbillard). The Stranger (Isambert) cast a look at her, and, struck with astonishment and horror, rushed off the stage—in fact, he ran smash-bang up against me and nearly knocked me over. Up sprang Mrs. Haller (Mrs. Anna Camperdown) and shrieked out, pointing to the spot where she had seen The Stranger (Isambert).

"MY HUSBAND'S MURDERER! THE ROBBER! SEIZE HIM!!!"

In one minute the stage was half-filled by the diggers from the pit. In a few hurried, passionate accents the excited woman explained that the actor she had just seen dressed as the Stranger was the man who had attacked and robbed her and her husband. All was excitement. The audience swarmed down from the galleries, and I ran round to the front to secure the money-boxes. Jimmy said that Mr. Isambert Saint Claremont had flown out of the stage-door like a madman.

"After him! Follow him! Lynch him!" shouted the diggers; and they drew their knives and swore that they would have his blood. Mrs. Camperdown led the way. Out they all rushed. The theatre was emptied. It was a clear night, and you could see the course for miles round. After having taken care of the receipts, I followed. I could see Mrs. Camperdown, in her white dress, a mile off, and could hear the diggers, who knew every inch of the country, hollaing like maniacs. It was an exciting chase. I could see the flash of knives, and every now and then a shot "plinged" from a revolver. The view-holla rang in the night air, but the fox was not found; and lucky was it for Isambert that they did not find him, for their blood was on fire, and they would have hewed him up like mince-meat.

To finish my story—which, I dare say, ladies and gentlemen, I have been too long in telling—Isambert Saint Claremont (or rather, Paul Driscoll, for that was his real name) had been a convict, had escaped, and had pursued the avocation of a "stick-up," or highwayman. Having a great natural talent for acting he took to it, but he never was able to give up "sticking" entirely. It was not that he did not make enough by acting, but that he was, as it were, forced to go out on the highway for the sake of the excitement. I found out afterwards, he would sometimes play three parts a night, and then go "sticking-up," get back to his lodgings, and sleep all the day. He was a little mad. I have no doubt that it was he who attacked the Camperdowns. He was an excellent actor and a fearless man. The end of him was that he was shot by a mounted policeman near Beaver Creek.

Poor Camperdown died a few days after the chase. The last time I saw his widow was at Sydney. She was looking very well, indeed grander than ever. I made her an offer of my hand and heart, and told her that with her talent and genius, and my knowledge of working, advertising, and posting, we could live happily and make a fortune. But she didn't seem to see it. She laughed heartily, and told me that she thought I had forgotten who I was speaking to. She started for Melbourne the week after. This is my singular experience. (Signed) PETREL CRANKETT.

P.S.—I know of a good giant and a kangaroo (alive) born monstrously, if such speculations recur at this present likely.

T. W. R.



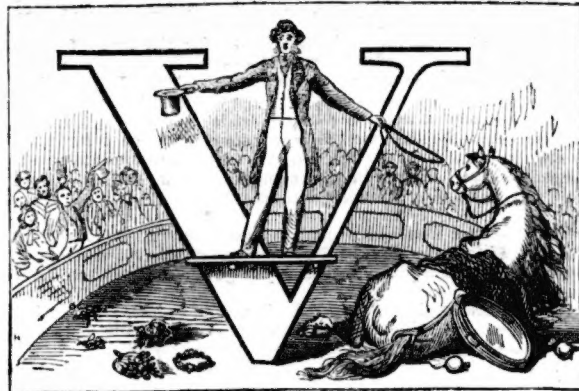
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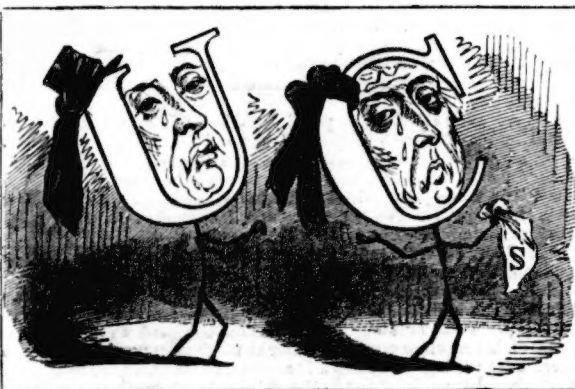
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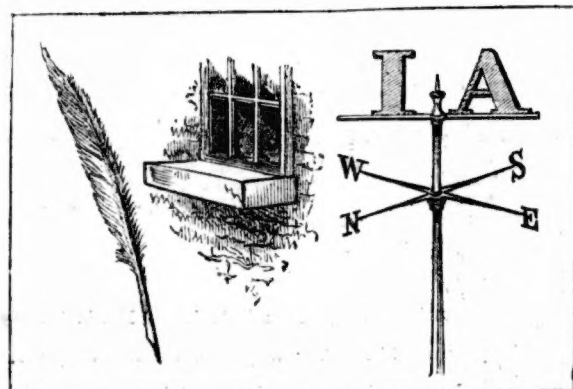
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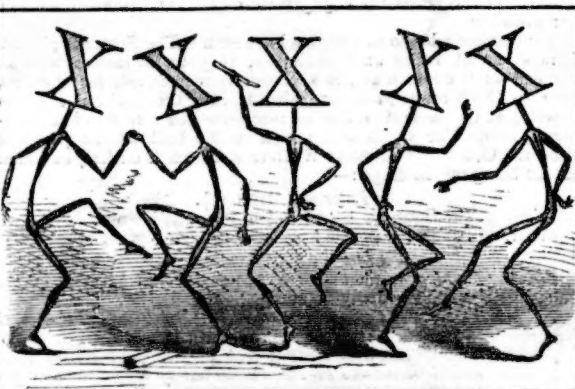
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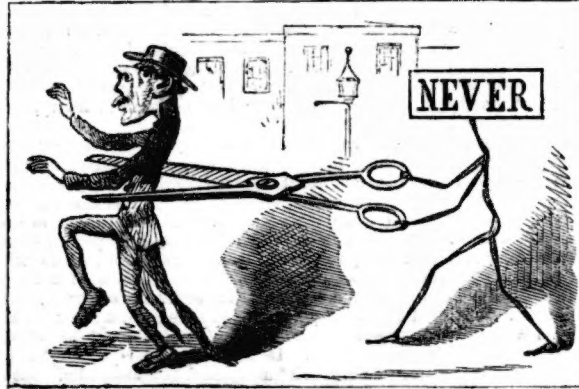
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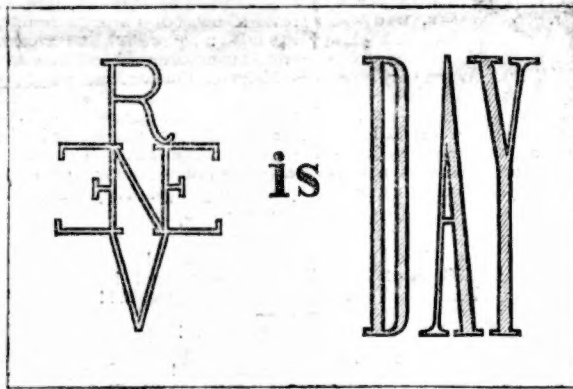
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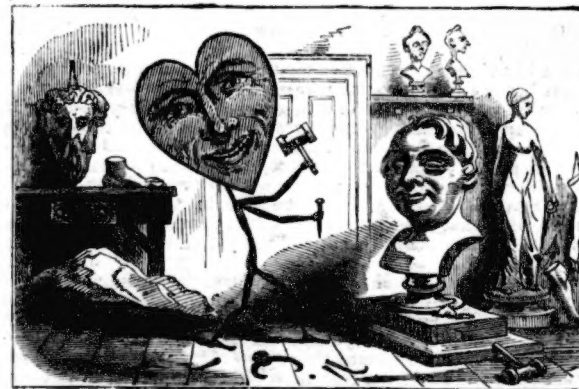
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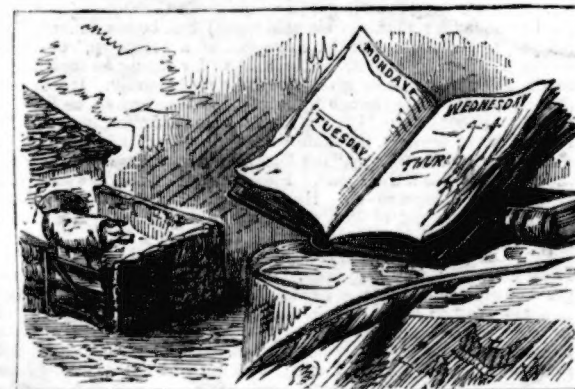
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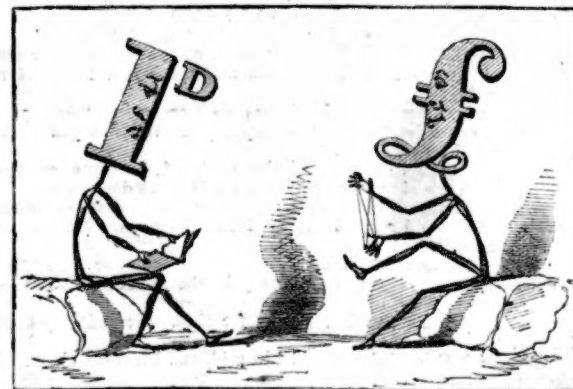
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